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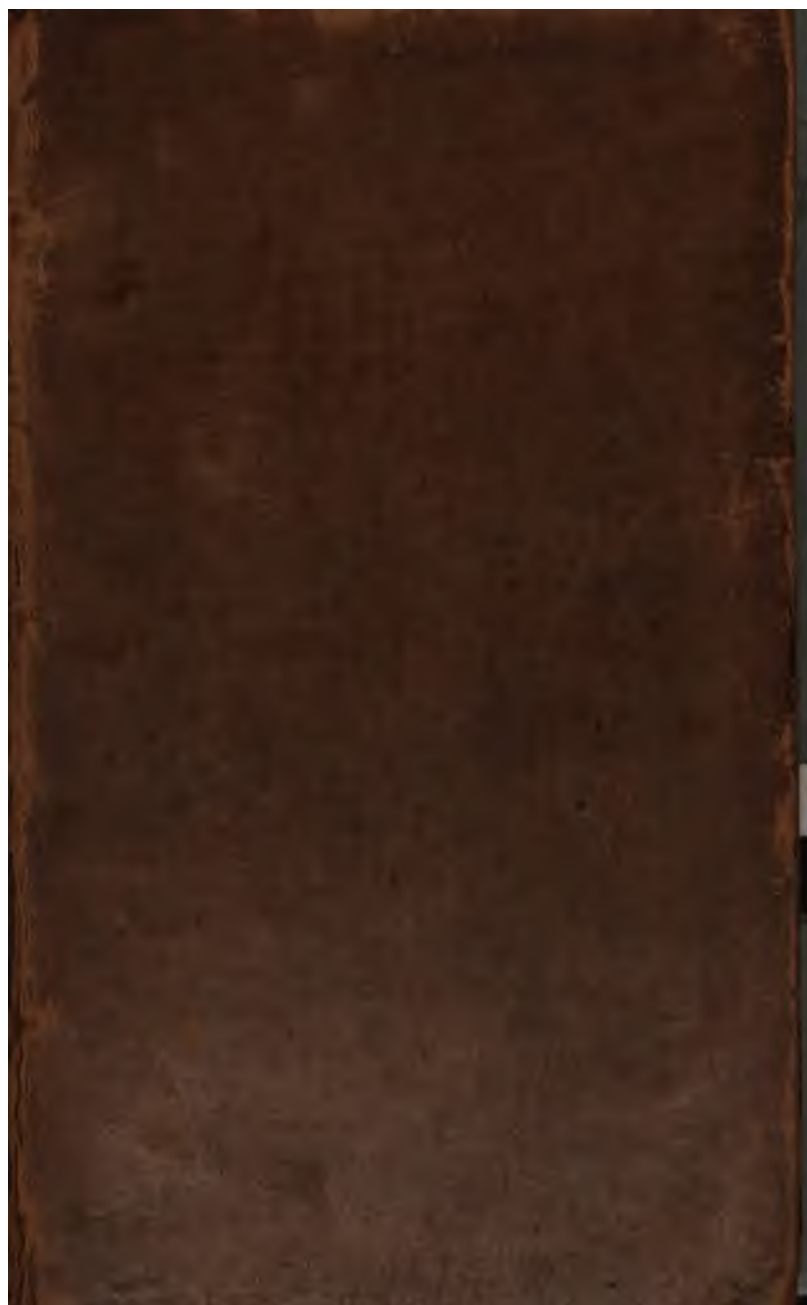
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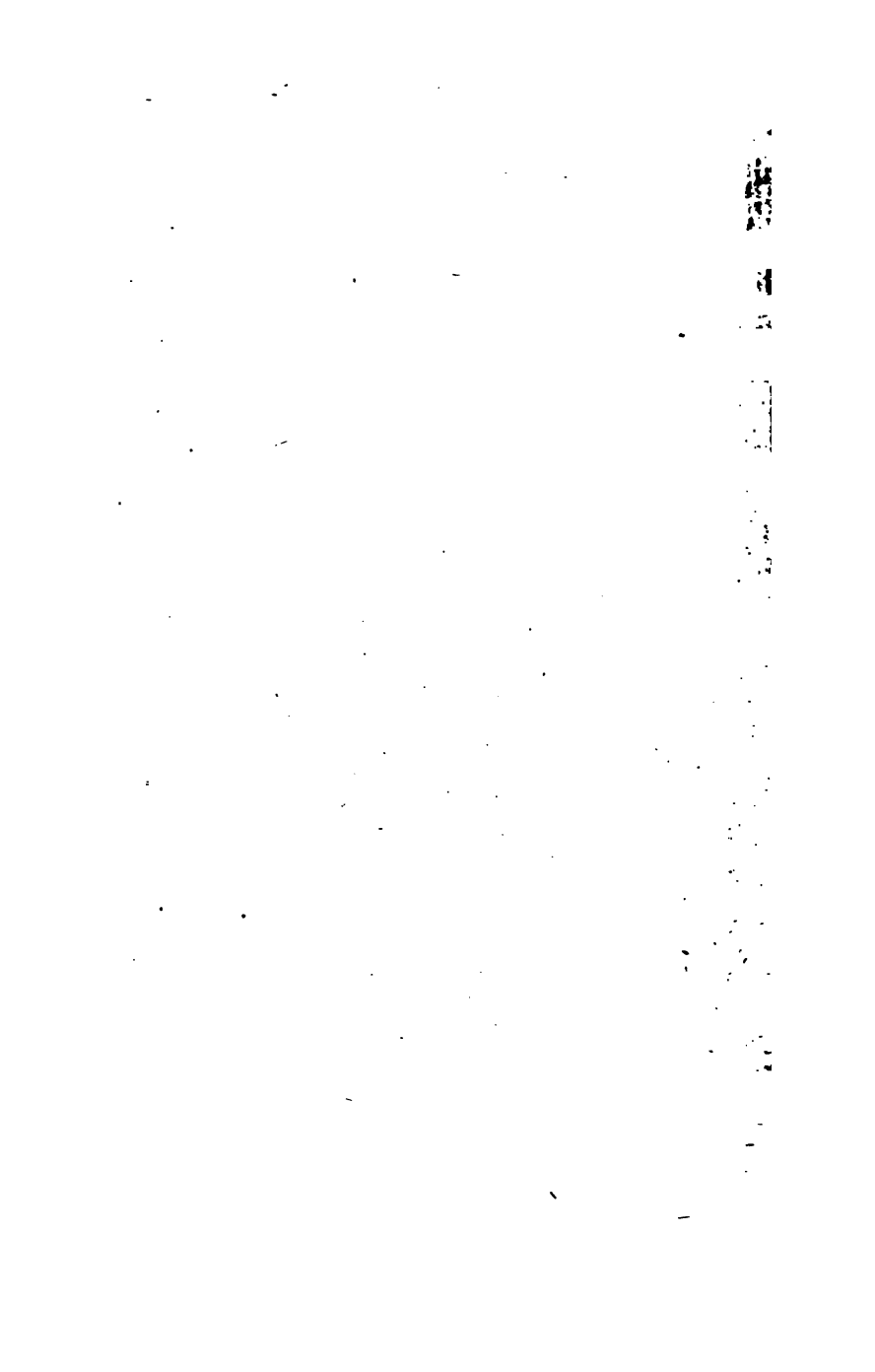
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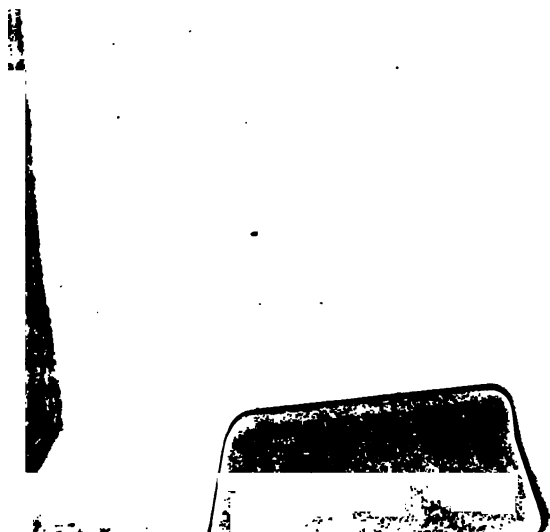
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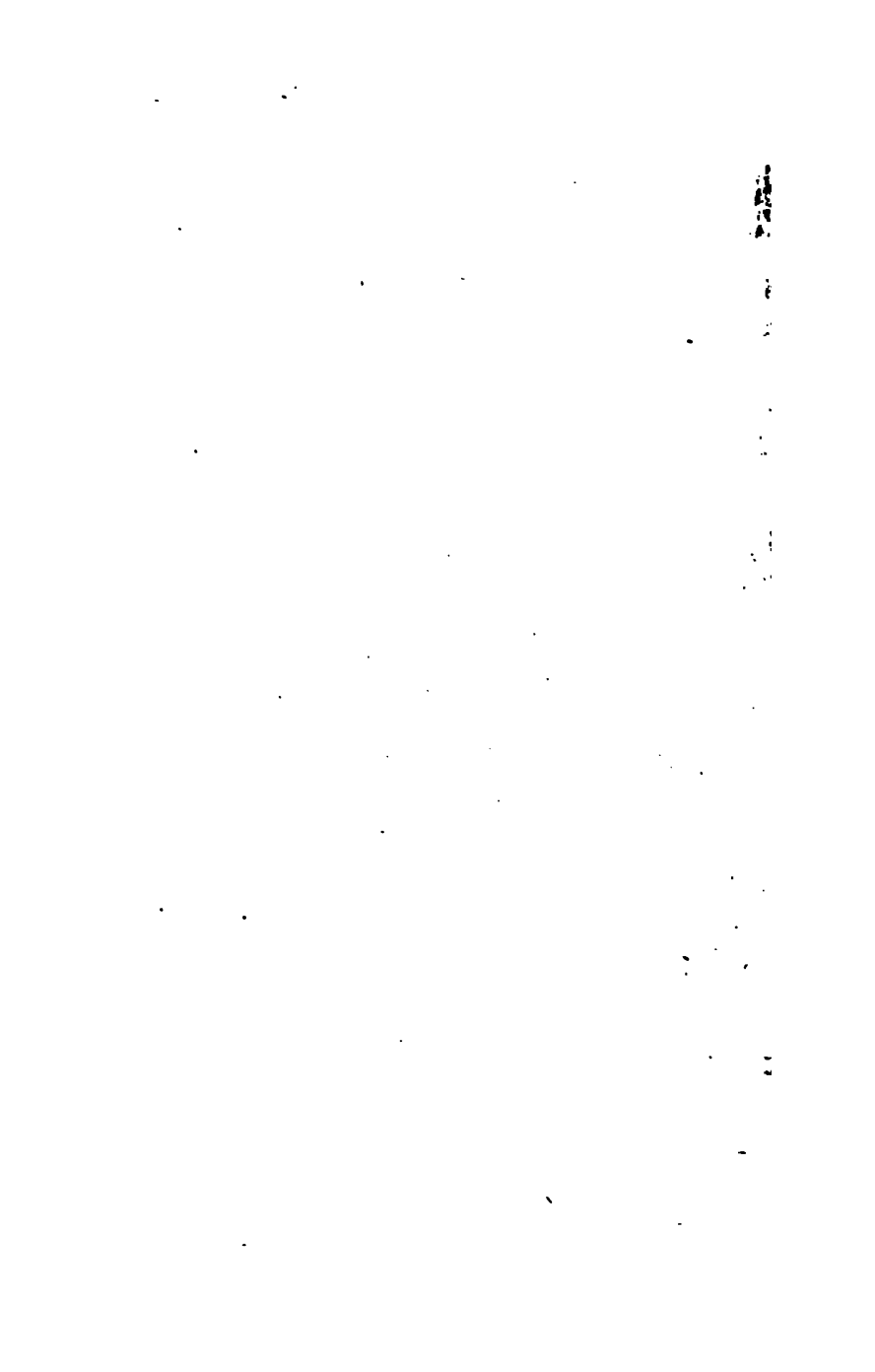
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A SERIES of
GENUINE LETTERS
BETWEEN
HENRY and FRANCES.

Felices ter et ampliùs
Quos irrupta tenet copula; nec malis
Divulsus querimoniis,
Supremâ citiùs solvet amor die.
HOR. Lib. I. Od. 13.

The THIRD EDITION,
Revised, Corrected, Enlarged, and Improved,
By the AUTHORS.

V O L. II.



L O N D O N:
Printed for W. JOHNSTON, in Ludgate Street.
MDCCLXVII.

249. s. 36.

elegant happiness is now destroyed! How have I pleased myself with thinking that, on knowing, you would love and esteem her, as much as I do! Where, when separate from you, shall I find a friend, whose conversation can, at once, delight, and improve! whose sprightliness can cheer the present hour, and point the way, to make the future happy! indeed, my dearest Harry, I sigh for your loss too, when I consider myself as the object of your affection. I admired, and would have endeavoured to copy her; that nobleness of sentiment, uniformity of manners, and that calm, cheerful resolution, which shone through all her conduct, would have been stronger lessons to your Fanny, than all the volumes of Philosophy that were ever wrote; for her actions illustrated their arguments, and proved to demonstration, that what they prescribed, was practicable. But, to shew that such a bright example has not been wholly thrown away on me, I will endeavour to imitate even the hardest part of her character; that of cheerfully resigning the person we love, when we hope, and believe it for their happiness. I will now no longer murmur at losing, what I esteemed the second blessing of my life; she goes to her lord; may she find in him a due reward of all her merits! my utmost wish for her, is that—no more—for more were vain.

All I can tell you of Kitty's affair is, that she has run directly counter to your's, mine, and Nancy's advice; and is now under the tuition of —, and her grandmother. Though I have been in the house near three weeks, she has never mentioned the matter to me, nor I to her. I sincerely rejoice at her silence on this subject, for it is indeed a nice affair to advise in.

As often as your leisure will admit, I shall be pleased with your observations on Pliny; for,
though

though I have not the books by me, at present, they will afford me a double delight, when I have.

I expect a letter from Lady O——, by to-morrow post, which will, I believe, either fix the time for, or entirely put off our journey to C——. If the latter should happen, tell me, my heart's dear Harry, may I not hope to see you here? I am forbidden to go near you; will you not soften that cruel interdiction, by coming to her, who is, and ever will be, sincerely and affectionately

Your's,

FRANCES.

LETTER CLXX.

My dearest FANNY,

I RECEIVED all your letters safe from Gowran, which, with two from Kilkenny, I have now before me, to answer. I do not remember to have ever had so much pleasure, at once, in your absence, as at present; such “a feast of reason, such a flow of soul!” Consider the pleasure of your correspondence, which would have been portioned out to a month's time, by a mistake of the posts, as it were, dammed up for a while, to rush upon me, in one instant, with a torrent of joy.

I declare to you unfeignedly, for indeed I never flattered you, that I never read any thing so infinitely more than pretty, so extremely fine and elegant, as your letters are; which I am the more remarkably sensible of at present; for as I have a collected body of them before me, they give strength and beauty to each other: the only enhanced value, they are capable of receiving, being owing to themselves. Upon my honour, when I read some passages, where the fineness of the sentiment, the beauty of the stile, or the poetical, or

epigrammatical turn of the expression is remarkable, I feel my heart move within me; and indeed, my Fanny, I should not know I have an heart, but from the pleasure, or pain, I receive from you. Now this sensation is not barely such a one, as men of letters or taste perceive, upon reading fine writing of any kind: For this, perhaps, I may be too phlegmatick: but I perceive such an exultation, made up of joy, and pride, in my heart, as if (I speak but by guess) I had said such things myself. But, upon this occasion, all the vanity, I have to flatter myself with, is, that, next to the art of writing well, is that taste, which is capable to judge of fine writing.

I never was sensible of any pain from receiving favours; but that want of power to express my gratitude, I have a good notion of; and it proceeds from a fullness of heart, which, like a croud of ideas, or, in short, like any other croud, prevents its own utterance. Gloster says of Cordelia, "her full heart reverberates no hollow sound of emptiness;" in me there is a little matter of pride, upon such an occasion, lest, by too servile an acceptance of the favour, I should appear unworthy of it; for I think too much expression about the matter would make me look upon a person as an object fit for alms, rather than a subject proper for my friendship. There is a kind of honesty too in my sturdiness, lest I should seem to mean the repaying a kindness, merely with words.

I did recollect, at first, that you had not a Pliny by you, and therefore could not understand my letters: But I concluded that you would have sent to —, for his, which I beg you will do immediately, and read those particular passages, which my letters relate to, by themselves; and you can go regularly through the books, when I *return you your's*. I shall not mention one word
more

more upon the subject, 'till you tell me you have got them, for my chief aim is to entertain you.

What you tell me about Lady O——, gives me a great deal of concern, upon your account: for it will be a very great loss to you, in many particulars. What is the occasion of this sudden change of affairs? I shall have a great loss of her too, as her uncommon cleverness, and unaffected manners have given me a sincere esteem and friendship for her; but your misfortune and mine are not to be mentioned together: For I shall have you, but you will want her. However, though you are deprived of the happiness of a companion, you cannot lose her, as a friend; for her regard and esteem for you is founded upon your own sense and merit, and will consequently last with hers. This sudden removal, I am afraid, will make it impossible for me to have the pleasure of seeing you at C——: and indeed it would be improper to incumber her, at present, with a visit.

Adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CLXXI.

I AM almost ashamed to acknowledge the receipt of my dear Harry's last letter. I absolutely blush, while I think of it. I can bear any thing better than praise, which I do not deserve: Yet praise from you will always be pleasing to me; for, though I may be conscious I do not merit it, yet I cannot distrust your sincerity; and sure I shall always be delighted with your thinking I am what I would wish to be.

I by no means doubt your receiving much pleasure from such a bundle of my letters coming

at once to your hands. My idea of it is like passing a day together. Though the subject was often changed, the discourse was continued; while a single letter appears like a short visit, where the greatest part of those moments, we should wish to employ more agreeably, is taken up with the form of coming in, and going out: Yet, I confess, I would rather see a person I loved, for half an hour every day, than be debarred that pleasure for a month, though I were certain they would then stay a week with me; for I think the "joys of meeting hardly pay the pangs of absence." This may be owing to an impatience in my temper, which I would gladly correct, as it occasions me many melancholy hours; for, alas! the greatest part of my life is passed in a state of separation from you; and even when you are with me, the certainty of parting, at such a time, embitters the present pleasure. Pardon me, when I tell you that I have often suspected your love, when I have seen you quit me, with as much indifference as you would a common acquaintance; while my poor foolish heart has heaved, and eyes strained to follow you. I know you have so strong an understanding, as would, were you possessed of such a fond weakness, get the better of it; and yet, at this moment, I swear (I speak from my own heart) I wonder how you can bear to be so long, and often, absent. There is, I fear, but one way of accounting for it.—

I parted from Kitty, at Racoon, this morning: She pressed me much to go with her: I own, I was strongly prompted by inclination to accept her invitation; but durst not venture, without your consent. Nancy has promised to make her a visit, by next Thursday's stage: If you do not think it improper, and I do not hear from Lady O——, I shall gladly accompany her; But if you have any,
the

HENRY *and* FRANCES. 7

the least objection, or are apprehensive of any ill consequence from my going, I conjure you, by your love, to speak freely, and prevent me.

Lady O——'s going to settle in England is not a sudden start: she always said she would go, whenever she had completed her affairs here.

I have been at ——'s ever since I came to town: He has lent me his Pliny. A company, playing at cards by my side, stun me with their noise: I know not what I am writing; but this I know, that I am, with love, faith, and constancy,

Your's.

L E T T E R CLXXII.

HENRY to FRANCES.

BELIEVE me sincere in my praises of you; for upon that subject, all hyperbole is lost in truth. Whether, indeed, you really deserve all that I think, which is ten-fold more than ever I said of you, I cannot tell: Nay, sometimes I fancy not; only for this reason, that I am afraid there is not, in reality, any woman in the world so charming, as I imagine you to be; yet your merit is the same to me, which is capable of inspiring me with such pleasing ideas; as it amounts to the same, let sceptics wrangle ever so long, whether there is such a thing as matter in the universe, or whether it is only a spirit, which has the power of conveying such an idea to our senses. And as the amiable opinion I have of my dearest Fanny makes up most of my happiness in this life, I shall consider it as Cicero does an higher subject, “ that if it should
“ be a mistake, I would not part with the belief

“ of it, for a certainty of the highest good, in this-world*.”

Your simile, with regard to your letters, has a pretty fancy in it ; and there is a good deal of the same kind of turn in many of your writings, which has often made me declare, that I never met with any thing, in the epistolary stile, so very clever, as they are ; so that, even abstracted from the consideration of their coming from you, and being addressed to me, I do not read any thing which gives me a more refined entertainment.

I take it very unkindly, your seeming to suspect me of the least indifference to you. Whenever I can be near you, how few hours am I from you ? And, be assured, it is my misfortune, not my fault, that I am not constantly with you. If I do not always part from you with the appearance of that fondness, which you might expect, it is owing intirely to that temper, which I have endeavoured to practise myself into ; as I have very little of it from nature. No man has more tenderness, or soft affection about his heart, than I have ; and my philosophy, which is not of the Stoic kind, does not make me feel less in myself, but only serves to save appearances to the rest of the world. How often, my dear Fanny, have I most earnestly intreated of you never to say any thing of that kind to me again ? and, if you recollect yourself, you will find, we have had very few disputes, but upon this subject.

HENRY.

* Quod si in hoc erro, quod animas hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro : Nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo, animas esse immortales.
Cic.

L E T T E R CLXXIII.

SINCE you desire me to continue my notes upon Pliny, I shall go on with that subject again.

The first epistle of the third book puts me in mind of Lord Orrery's wish about the latter scenes of his life, hinted at in one of my former letters to you ; and in the passage I here allude to, for want of better light from history, he supposes after what manner Pliny passed the decline of life ; but I think the latter part of the letter, I am now upon, affords a strong presumption of this supposition ; and, as Pliny desires Calvisus to keep that letter by him, in order to judge of his philosophy, so shall we remember Lord Orrery's declaration with the same view. I think the character of Spurinna not unlike his own ; and there is one circumstance hinted at, when he takes the air in his chariot, in which they happily agree. In this letter there is a pretty distinction between being pleased, and being proud of a thing. " The only mark of age " he discovers, is prudence." This is a fine trait.

In the sixth epistle of the same book, in the comment on it, Lord Orrery gives us a gay ode, to divert our thoughts from the melancholy prospect of an old man ; which is like the merry epilogues, they give us often, after our tragedies. This argument has been treated pro and con in the Spectators : But for my part, I always chuse to retire with the bier ; for sober thoughts do me no harm, as I can be grave, without being melancholy. I am surprized his Lordship should say an old man was a dismal sight ; for a person, who views all things

" In the calm light of mild philosophy,"

regards with equal eyes both youth and age ; nay, I cannot think it requires any great straining of philosophy to bear even our own decay, as there are pleasures and solations indulged by Providence to every stage of life ; and, to a mind rightly turned, perhaps, not the least to the last ; and, if any uneasiness arises in our senescence, from a nearer prospect of the grave, it is unbecoming a Christian, who rests in hope.

There is something extremely elegant, and a fine address of compliment, in several of Pliny's epistles, with a certain *tour d'expression, et de sentiment*, which is observable in the writings of the best and politest French authors. I shall give you but one example, among many ; because I would not prevent you, as you have not gone through his works. It is in the eighth epistle of this book :
 " And, since it is equally excellent to merit and
 " confer benefits, I see you are resolved to lay
 " claim to the praise of both, by giving to an-
 " other what you have deserved yourself."

In the observations upon the second epistle of the fourth book, my Lord, after his humane way, reprimands Pliny for his frequent abuse of *Regulus* ; which, as I hinted, is an instance of his humanity, but not of his judgment. There are many men of vile deserts, so far beyond the reach of laws, that there is no way to punish them, but by satire or invective ; and I believe that several people, naturally vicious in themselves, have been restrained within the bounds of social morality, not from respect to the Tables, but out of fear of being

" damn'd to everlasting fame."

From the whole tenor of Pliny's character, and it is this way we should judge of men, he inveighs *against Regulus* from a virtuous rage, rather than
 from

from hatred, malice, or any uncharitableness. This puts me in mind of a sentiment of your's, upon some such occasion as this, which may not be improperly repeated here: It is upon the subject of revenge; * "As a passion, it is a vice; but, as a principle, a virtue." Pursued with malice and ill-nature, upon slight or common provocations, it is a passion instigated by the devil; but great and real injuries, proceeding from extreme vice and immorality, call aloud for justice, and then vengeance becomes a godlike principle. Perhaps it would be a proper criticism here, to distinguish between the words *revenge* and *avenge*.

In the latter part of the comment upon the fourth epistle, there is a very just observation, That it is absolutely necessary for us to be as wary in the choice of our amusements, as of our studies: For which reason, I have often thought, that there wanted extremely such an office to be established in all states, as a general reveller; who should prescribe and preside over the amusements, pleasures, and diversions of all ranks, all professions, and all ages of men, even from their childish years; which would be an institution of admirable service to the world.

Read the whole nineteenth epistle, and the comment upon it. I fancy there are some passages in both, which will strike and please my dear Fanny; and, in order to leave the impression on your mind, I shall put an end to this letter, with the addition only of an allusion to one of Prior's poems,

"So thinking on thy charming youth, &c."

HENRY.

* Letter XLVIII. last paragraph.

LETTER CLXXIV.

HENRY to FRANCES.

I SUPPOSE, by my not hearing from you last post, that you do not get my letters regularly ; which, I hope, is owing to your being retired to the rock, though you have, at present, extreme bad weather for bathing. I have a melancholy prospect before me for my wheat harvest, and I have the greatest quantity, and the best in this country ; most of which is lodged by the rain, and shedding by the wind. *Mais vive la philosophie !*

I hope to have a letter from you to-day ; but cannot get it, before this goes to the post : so I shall go on with my Pliny, which I never read, but when I am to write to you ; and, as I undertook this work merely for your amusement, so I find it now, for that reason, if I had no other, the pleasantest manner of reading : It is certainly the most improving method too ; and, if I had a great fortune, I would allow a good salary to a librarian, who shou'd antecede my study, and mark out to me only those passages, which were remarkable or ingenious, improving or entertaining ; as I would give my new shoes to a servant to wear first. The person, I would employ for this purpose, should rather be one of a refined taste than of deep learning, and of more natural understanding than great acquired knowledge. In short, my dearest Fanny, you should be my Minerva, my preceptor ; for even from your fragments I might hope to grow rich in wisdom, and to be polished into virtue. This last expression has made a sentiment occur to me, that there is a certain refined taste, (parsons may call it grace, if they will) which, unless born with a man, the best-disposed Christian will be
but

but an heavy, unformed lump of morality. What is that reverence for the antients, that humane love for our cotemporaries, that generous benevolence for posterity, that tender sense for another's sorrow, that high relish for a stranger's happiness, and, lastly, that noble, philosophic, heart-thrilling, and religious ardor, which possesses the whole soul with enthusiastic rapture, upon the contemplation of the astonishing greatness of the works of Providence, and the infinite goodness of their incomprehensible Author? What are all these refined pleasures owing to, I say, but to a natural taste and quick relish for virtue; to a certain gifted capacity, large enough to comprehend the whole intellectual universe; that is, all mankind, past, present, and to come; and reaches so high, as to embrace even God himself; all which, a plain, good man has no more idea of, than we can of the pleasures of a sixth sense. Addison has somewhat the same turn of thought with regard to piety, when he says, "that some people want parts to be devout, and could as well make an epic poem, as a fervent prayer."

But to return to Pliny, who is properly enough introduced after such a subject, as carried me beyond myself just now.

The twenty-first epistle of the fourth book is an extreme pretty one. I wept for the Helvidiæ, not so much for their death, as for Pliny's grief at it.

In the next epistle there is a poetical witticism in the allusion of the arrow; which is, I think, the first instance of that kind I have met with in this author.

I am charmed with the whole twenty-third epistle. That truly noble and philosophic exclamation, wishing for that stage of life, when he might live to himself, transports me. There is
nothing,

nothing, for which I despise a person so much, as the paltry wish to be younger; a childish longing for a bib and bells again! He must have spent his life very ill, or mean to do so, who would desire to return back to any æra of it; for we are, at any stage, capable of virtue.

In the twenty-eighth epistle, Pliny has mistaken the matter, with regard to painting; for I think, it is a much easier matter to copy a picture, than to draw from the life.

In the last epistle of this fourth book, he mentions a spring, which ebbed and flowed. There is a * well some miles from this, which is reported to do the same. I never examined into it, but shall ride over there some day, on purpose.

I am surprized, that any person of common sense could mistake the legacy, which he was so pleased with, Epistle I. Book V. for that from Curianus was the only one, which did him honour. He says, "A small legacy is fallen to me;" which shews, he was telling his friend something new: and the former legacy was above two years before; at least; for he says, that the suit, with the co-heirs, was of so long standing. The mistake of the commentator's could never have happened, but from the mere force of prejudice; which has amazing powers, in many higher instances. Pliny first speaks of Pomponia's favour, to which it was natural to apply his expressions of the gratefulness of the present; and, leaving the reader in this error, almost during the whole letter, what he says at last, though it breaks with full day upon you, could not open the eyes of prejudice.

In the fourth epistle you may see the extravagant fees, which were given to lawyers, in Pliny's time. This may make us a little better reconciled

to the extortion in our own days: though, to view this matter in the light of political morality, the present exorbitancy ought to alarm us extremely; for, the higher law or justice is vended, the scarcer it must be; and the poor, who need it most, will, consequently, have least of it. Then oppression reigns, and liberty is no more; and then is a state in the proper crisis for a revolution, either by rebellion at home, or invasion from abroad. At the time Pliny hints at this extravagance, the great Roman Empire was hastening to its ruin.

Adieu!

HENRY.

HIATUS.

LETTER CLXXV.

My dearest FANNY,

Museum:

OUR affizes are over, and I am returned to myself, that is, to you. I wait not for the pleasure of hearing from you, but amuse myself, in the mean time, with the more imperfect one of writing to you. I am now retired among my books, the best part of which library I esteem your letters; for they not only teach me wisdom, but promise me that glorious end, of which wisdom is the surest means, happiness.

I have read some pages this morning in the second volume of Orrery's Pliny; but should not, at this time, think of entertaining you out of this author, if I had not from thence a fair opportunity of addressing myself more particularly to my heart's only aim.

You may remember, that you rallied me upon not taking notice of Pliny's epistles to Calpurnia, in my former remarks; but I defended myself,
upon

upon there not being any in the first volume. The fourth of the sixth book, which is the first of the second volume, is the first of these epistles. I confess myself charmed with it; and am the more particularly fond of her, as, from the hint of her constitution and make, she seems to resemble you; as you, in return, do her in this; that I think you would deserve, on the like occasion, a letter full of the same fondness, and tenderness, and conjugal regard. Whenever I raise a statue to Pliny, I will have that whole epistle inscribed on the pedestal.

The two first lines of the fortieth page contain a very fine and a just sentiment. From the second paragraph of the comment upon this sixteenth epistle, you may draw a comparison between Pliny and Shakespeare, by observing, that the little jingle, and affected turns, in both their writings, were rather the false taste of their age, than the vices of the authors.

The reflection in the seventeenth epistle, that
 * “ he, who envies another, must be his inferior,”
 is fine.

* At the end of the notes upon the fourth epistle of the seventh book, Lord Orrery wishes that this letter had perished; I suppose, because it betrays a little vanity about his trifling performances in poetry. He is very often angry at him, when he shews a weakness of any kind; because it is natural for us to wish those, we love or esteem for some qualities, perfect in all. Now I am not quite so severe in this matter: “ Non ego paucis offendor maculis.” Human nature has many foibles; and, when I perceive some in a great character, I suppose I see the whole man; but, when a perfect

* Si non invideres major es: Nam qui invidet minor est.
 Incert. Auth.

system

system is presented to me, I suspect the genuineness of the whole; for, as I conclude a part is acted somewhere, I think it possible it may be done throughout: Which gives me occasion to remark upon the only foible, I ever could object to my own Calpurnia; and which, like the caprices of beauty, may be compared to shrubs, that sometimes occur in laying out an improvement; which though out of rule to plant there, would be want of taste to root out.

The first paragraph of the fifteenth epistle gives me an opportunity of renewing my remark upon one of the epistles of the first volume: † I forget which of them; and, as I have returned you that book, I cannot set myself right now; but it is where he comes very near preferring a life of retired leisure to public business; but dares not speak quite out, for the reasons there mentioned. In the passage of this letter, which I am now quoting, he says, “I dare not say my life would be better, but certainly it would be happier, if my studies were my sole employments.”

I think, Lord Orrery has mistaken that passage in the eighteenth epistle, where Pliny says, “The land itself will never want a proprietor;” for Pliny seems to consider this farm with a view of setting it, not of selling; and therefore rather wants a tenant, than a purchaser. The original expression ‡, “*à quo exerceatur*,” seems to warrant this sense.

On the nineteenth epistle, Faulkner makes a remarkable blunder in the comment; about the genealogy of Fannia; but, indeed, the whole edition of this book is very faulty.

† See Letter CLXII.

‡ *By whom the land is occupied*: which distinguishes a tenant from the owner of the soil.

In the observations upon the twenty-fifth epistle, my Lord quotes, as a proverb, this sentence: "He, that is not for me, is against me;" by which he seems not to recollect, that it is a passage in Scripture, and spoken by our Saviour *. I am sure, if he had been aware of this, he would not have introduced it so lightly here.

Adieu!

LETTER CLXXVI.

I AM infinitely obliged to my dearest life, for the kindness and constancy of his letters: They have, indeed, almost made me amends for the pangs of absence. I know nothing else that could have soothed, or even amused my mind, but those dear pledges of your love. I confess I never felt such severe anguish in my life, as at our last parting; and, though you appeared so then, I do not now believe you was indifferent. A thousand circumstances concurred to render it more painful to me, than any of our former separations. You have kindly obviated the most material; and I shall now endeavour to forget the past, and only look forward with the pleasing hope of our meeting.

The gentleness with which you treat my greatest fault, will, I flatter myself, have a better effect, than the severest reproof. Allow me, my dearest Harry, to say, without a boast, my nature is honest, generous, and open. I was brought up with, perhaps, too much tenderness and lenity: Unused to harshness, I cannot easily bring myself to bear it from one I passionately love:—But be

* Luke ii. 23.

assured

assured I will endeavour to root this weed, not shrub, intirely out of your little parterre.

I wish I was as well able to vye with the merita of Calpurnia's character, as your epistles, for nobleness of sentiment, justness of thought, elegance, and tenderness of expression, may with Pliny's; but, alas! I fear I fall as far short of her, as you, in my opinion, surpass him. In one respect, however, I am sure I shall equal, if not exceed her; in my unbounded love, and faithful friendship for thee, thou dearest, most amiable, and deserving of thy sex!

I hope, when I write next, I shall be more at peace; for I am not settled yet. In the meantime, I beg you will excuse the wildness and incoherence of this scrawl, and believe me, with the tenderest affection and sincerest esteem, your fond and faithful

FANNY.

LETTER CLXXVII.

Dear FANNY,

I RECEIVED no letter from you by Tuesday night's post, so suppose there was not any certainty, or alteration in your affairs, at that time, worth recording. I have sent to town, expecting a letter by Thursday's post, and am very sure I shall not be disappointed. I hope the letter itself may not disappoint me.

Since I received Lady ——'s last letter, I have had frequent struggles with myself about answering it. If I do not answer it, I suffer the correspondence to drop on my side; which is unpolite: If I do answer, I may seem to presume too much upon an occasional adventure, and thereby be deemed unworthy of the honour proceeding from

it. Upon the whole, I have determined in the negative, and sacrificed my inclinations to my prudence, upon this reasoning; that few men can deserve such high honour, by their merits; but almost any man may appear not unworthy of it, by his modesty. One particular thing, which tempted me to write, was, the occurring of some farther thoughts upon that comfortable subject of the mercy of God; which was part of my letter to her; and which I did not carry as far as I might, with a little reflection, at that time, lest it should look like a premeditated essay, what was, in reality, but an occasional occurrence; though, after what manner hinted to me, from any part of my letter, I cannot, at present, recollect.

The only objection which divines make to the unbounded mercy of God, is his infinite justice; for, say they, Justice is concerned about punishing the wicked, as well as rewarding the virtuous: and the only scope they will allow to mercy, is remission upon repentance.

Now let us consider the matter impartially, among ourselves; for observe, there is nobody by, but you and I.

In the first place, it is high presumption to pretend to reason about the attributes of God; and all definitions of this kind may be considered "like the eye in prospect, whose strength can find no end; but weakness makes one." The qualities and faculties of the human mind, from whence they vainly argue, may have (and it is more than probable) so little relation to the divine mind, that there may not be even any analogy between them; and may, perhaps, to a spirit capable of conceiving both, be as different ideas, as sound and colour.

But let us dispute with them, upon their own terms, and speak of God as man; and let us agree,
for

for the sake of argument, that, though the qualities of a human creature certainly bear no proportion to the attributes, they may, however, have such a relation to them as time has to eternity; and thus we may come to a clear method of reasoning upon this subject.

Human justice then, as blended with human passions and human policies, may be defined a retribution of rewards and punishments; but, to consider it in the abstract, I do not think that even human justice comprehends the latter part of this definition; for punishments are inflicted either to revenge or to deter. Now, with regard to the first, a legislature is dispassionate; and, with regard to the latter, I am sure, that if a man could commit any crime, which it was impossible for him, or any body else ever to commit again, it would be a cruelty to allot any penalty for it; because, in this case, the benefit of the example could never operate. In this state, then, I look upon our souls in the next world; as having committed offences, which we can no longer repeat, and the punishment of which can then no more avail us, or serve as a wholesome example, to deter others; nor is God a man, that he should be angry.

I shall not add any thing farther upon this head, but just to observe to you, that the definition of mercy, as it is given in the beginning of this discourse, absolutely annihilates the virtue, by making it only part of another; for forgiveness, upon repentance, is not a distinct operation, according to that sense; but merely a piece of justice. If I forgive my debtor, he is obliged to my generosity: but, if he pays the debt, he releases himself; and I but perform common equity, by giving up his obligation, upon conditions performed.

Adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

FRANCES to HENRY.

THE unsettled, and, of course, uncomfortable situation I have been in, these three months, makes me feel a very sincere satisfaction at being able to date this letter from my own apartment, or, rather, your's; for I cannot, will not call it mine, 'till you have blest it with your presence. Haste, then, my dearest life, my kindest love, my all, my being, haste, and restore your Fanny to the enjoyment of herself in you! bring to her wishes, to her transports bring, all that can make mortality endured, and render immortality still more desirable!

The impatience of my fond desire to see you, has hurried my imagination into a kind of rhapsody; but I own I should think it a crime to love you after the common, sober, insipid manner; and, if excess of love be pardonable in any woman, I may stand excused. My constitution is naturally cold; nor could it be warmed into love by an object less worthy, than my heart's dear Harry. This declaration, which is, indeed, a true one, may well secure you from any fear of change in my heart: I wish, both for your sake and my own, that I had merits sufficient to furnish me with the same security. But, as your love and constancy outweigh even your other merits to me, I will rest satisfied, from my dependence on them, though conscious of my want of worth to deserve them, in any other way, but by returning them an hundred-fold.

I cannot help saying, I am sorry the correspondence, between Lady — and you, is at an end; though, I am certain, you judged it right.

Though we can have no perfect knowledge of the attributes of God, I cannot think it presumption to form an idea, according to our finite capacity, that he is just and merciful. If we believe the Bible to be a work of inspiration, we must assent to this opinion. If we consider it as the work of mere man, unassisted, uninspired, it appears, that the result of natural reason, as far as finite can comprehend infinite, has given us an idea both of the Almighty and his attributes; and sure it cannot be criminal to employ that reason, which he hath bestowed upon us, in contemplation of his excellence. The fault, which I think the generality of men, and particularly divines, run into, is not the reasoning on the divine attributes, but daring to set bounds to what their poor finite capacities cannot comprehend. — I cannot, by any means, agree with you, that it is probable there should be no analogy between the divine and human mind. We believe God to be all-wise, all-good. We must change the idea of these attributes into folly and cruelty, if we suppose he did not form the faculties of our souls by the most perfect model—by himself; though he confined their operation within a narrower sphere. But when we shall put off this frail mortality, that now clogs and incloses the faculties of our souls, I do believe they will be enlarged; and of what use could they be, had they no analogy to the divine Being; in the contemplation of whose endless glory and perfection our chief happiness will, I presume, consist?

I am quite charmed with your argument for unbounded mercy. I think it is carried as far as finite wisdom can go; and, to make use of your own expression*, has shewn, that “God is not “made up of parts, but is one perfect being,”

* In some other place.

whose attributes co-operate and correspond together.

In compliance with your oft-repeated desire, you see I have ventured to touch upon a subject infinitely beyond my capacity; but it is in such a manner, as boys first learn to swim; conscious I am out of my depth, and afraid of drowning every instant: But my dear teacher will, I am sure, reach out his hand to save his little trembling pupil.

Adieu!

FRANCES.

LETTER CLXXIX.

My dearest FANNY,

Museum.

TO-MORROW is to be a very busy day with me, both at home and abroad; therefore I shall dedicate this pleasant, tranquil Sunday evening to you, lest I should miss a post. I am in haste too, to finish Pliny, that I may send it up along with the rest of your books.

In a note upon the twenty seventh epistle of the seventh book, we are informed of the name of that philosopher, who gave the famous advice to Augustus, to repeat the twenty-four letters, whenever he found his passion rising. I wish I had seen this passage before the last evening we spent at ——. The advice, indeed, I have often heard of; but never knew the author's name before, or I should have honoured it. I have very seldom known the charm put in practice; but always imagined, when I saw a man in a passion, that either he had never heard of it, or had never learnt his alphabet: Upon which hint, I am tempted sometimes to treat such persons like children, and hang a horn-book about their necks, saying, with *Brutus*,

"I will

“ I will use thee for my sport, yea, for my
 “ laughter, when thou grow’st waspish.”

The cure for a scold, a poem in one of the *Tatlers*, is from such a hint, as this of *Athenodorus*.

In the observations upon this same epistle, Lord Orrery inveighs against the weakness and credulity, with regard to ghosts and apparitions. Now I cannot join with him in this particular; because there are some stories of this kind, so well attested, that they should gain credit, like other parts of history, upon the same authority. The belief of this matter is a thing above our reason, but not contrary to it; which is the proper definition of faith: And if it were made an article of our creed, I do not think it would be amiss; for it is not contrary to religion, as being vouched by holy writ: At least, I would not discourage the belief, since it is a strong proof of life, after death; and which every argument that tends to prove, adds strength to religion and virtue *. As to the immortality of the soul, which I lay hold of every opportunity to discourse upon, it is a thing, which a christian cannot doubt of; because there is express authority for it in that book, upon which his faith is founded: And even to a Deist it may be proved, *ex absurdo*; which is a method of arguing in the mathematics, when the truth of a proposition cannot be demonstrated in a direct manner, the assent is gained, by shewing the absurdity of the contrary opinion: As thus; if there be no hereafter for mankind, God is inconsistent, and unjust; the first, in giving us hopes (which we certainly have from the light of nature alone) that are never to be

* *Scito te mortalem non esse, sed corpus hoc: Nec enim is es quem forma ista declarat; sed mens cujusque is est quisque.*
Cic.

fulfilled; and the second, in suffering virtue, in any shape, to go unrewarded. That being, then, which is inconsistent, or unjust, cannot be God; ergo, a mortalist Deist sinks into an Atheist. I would treat an Atheist after the same manner that I mentioned just now, and brand him with that pupil ensign, which is the proper emblem of his extreme ignorance; for as the Psalmist justly expresses it.

“The fool hath said in his heart, there is no
“God.”

Orrery, in the notes upon the twenty-eight epistle, says, this letter should be placed the first of the whole collection; and he is certainly right: Proper lights, and particular points of view, are a great advantage to every thing. He often complains of the want of order through the whole; and I am angry at him, for not setting this matter right; for it would be as little trouble, as the observing upon it. I have a mind to do so myself, when I have finished the reading.

I am pleased with Pliny's sentiment upon ridicule, in the last paragraph of the twenty-ninth epistle: And I approve of it as an admirable weapon against vice; and surely fitter here employed, than, as Shaftsbury recommends it, for the test of truth. Almost any man would undergo fine, imprisonment, or pain itself, rather than the mortification of being laughed at. Addison, and other ingenious writers, have spoken so admirably upon the power of shame, or influence of modesty, that, for very shame, I shall not attempt to pursue the subject in this light; but shall take the liberty, for the honour of human nature, to consider this matter in a particular manner, which I never met with in any author.

Speech

Speech is not the distinguishing sign of an human creature ; for birds have been taught to speak : Nay, all the brute, or animal creation converse naturally ; for their tones are intelligible to each other ; and what are words, but sounds, and expressions of our ideas ? Rationality is not the proper sign neither ; for instinct makes that matter doubtful ; and it is certain, that all animals act logically. Ridibility is a mark much insisted upon ; but, if this is meant merely of a distortion of countenance, I have seen dogs laugh ; and if it be meant as a sign of cheerfulness, or pleasure, then the various expressions of these sensations, throughout the whole brute world, sufficiently answer to this definition. I look upon modesty, then, to be the only characteristic, or criterion, which properly distinguishes man from other animals ; as we are certainly the only creatures known who have the least sense of shame*.

I am, my fair inspirer,
Your oracle,

HENRY.

* It gives me a singular pleasure to find that Butler had the same thought before me, for in his *Remains*, which were first published, long since the former edition of these letters, there is this passage. " Shame is as much the propriety of human nature, though overseen by the philosophers, and perhaps more than reason, laughing, or looking askint, by which they distinguish men from beasts ; and the less men have of it, the nearer they approach to the nature of brutes." Chap. on Impudence.

LETTER CLXXX.

HENRY to FRANCES.

I SENT a second messenger to the post, suspecting the first had deceived me; but not a line from you, though you must know how anxious I am, at present, to learn some particulars relating to your situation. Well! I am angry now—but A, B, C, &c. and now kisses, and friends; and you are my own spoiled pet again: But, if I do not hear from you by tomorrow, I must eke out the Roman alphabet with the Greek and Hebrew. I sent to know, if Kitty had any account of you, but received no satisfaction from thence.

But to return to Pliny: I think Orrery too severe upon the second epistle of the eighth book, not considering it as wrote to a friend, and not to the world. The privilege of friendship is, to think aloud: And shall I be reprimanded for communicating to my dearest Fanny my humane sentiments, with regard to the * gleaner's harvest, &c.? Or, shall I be thought ridiculous for telling you, that I have spent good part of this morning in the amusement of a Roman Emperor, catching flies? not like Domitian, to kill them; but to retrieve them from their torpid state by the heat of my hand, and have the joy to see them flutter about the room, with added life and vigour. I think it a wrong thing, to discourage, in any sort, the exercise of humanity, even the talking of it; as by this means, perhaps, some people may be, as it were, intrapped into virtue †; by professing it first out of

* Letter CLXVII.

† Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eo perductus, ut non tantum recte facere possim, sed nisi recte facere non possim.

Cic.
vanity,

vanity, they may come afterwards to practise it out of shame. Many a coward has been induced to fight, because he has happened to boast that he would.

In the twenty-second epistle, there is a very just sentiment, and a very proper one to be considered by the severe moralist, or the *extragiously virtuous* :
 " He who hates faults, hates mankind."

The twenty-third epistle is a very affecting one, and the character of Junius Avitus is very amiable. It is, indeed, the nature of the afflicted to enumerate every little circumstance, which once gave us pleasure in the enjoyment of what we have lost ; and it is sometimes a mortifying reflection, that, while we are multiplying our joys, we may, perhaps, be but increasing the earnest of our griefs.

In the seventh letter of the ninth book, and several precedent ones, I find the reason for Lord Orrery's essay upon antient architecture, which you may remember, I was a little alarmed about in his preface to this work ; for which I here offer my palinode.

In the eighth Epistle, there is an instance of wit in the comment : " Vanity, like smoke, smothers and obscures the flame, from whence it proceeds." I have observed a great deal of lively fancy, as well as just thought, in my Lord's writing, through the course of this work : And, upon the whole, I think he has shewn himself a man of virtue, a man of learning, and a man of taste ; and if he was not also a man of rank and fortune, which might make my attachment suspected by persons, who have none of the qualities above-mentioned to ennoble their sentiments, I would certainly take some solicitous pains to become acquainted with him.

In the last paragraph of the preface to the tenth book, my Lord seems in doubt about the rendering

ing the word, Dominus; which he has done very justly, by translating it, Sir; as it is addressed by Pliny to Trajan. It is in this manner we speak to our Kings; and the French, who are patterns of all politeness and decorum, salute their Grand Monarque by the stile of Sire.

The twenty-eighth Epistle of the tenth book should immediately precede the thirtieth; because, in this last, he refers to the former, in these words: "I had informed you, by my last letter, that Lycormas, &c." I take especial notice of the want of order in this particular, because my Lord has attempted to place all the letters of this tenth and last book, in a regular series; and, upon this occasion, I shall repeat what I said in a former letter, Why did he not take the same pains throughout?

In his thirtieth epistle, Pliny gives an absurd reason for not detaining the Ambassador: He says, it was because Lycormas had desired he should be detained, 'till he himself arrived.

The thirty-fifth and thirty ninth epistles from Trajan, are exact models of all the court answers to public addresses.

Adieu, my life! and believe me, 'till to-morrow's post,

Your's,

ATHENODORUS.

LETTER CLXXXI.

MY dear little shrub, my arbutus, my ever-green, I wish you joy of your retirement, and happy vocation from * * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

I am

I am really charmed with your reasoning, upon the analogy between the finite perfections and the divine attributes, so justly deduced from the wisdom and goodness of Providence ; and am pleased, that I carried my sentiments no farther upon that subject, than merely to suggest, that, perhaps, there might be no relation between them : For, when I come close to the argument with the divines, I enter the lists upon their own terms ; but I only fix the feet of Jacob's ladder on the earth, while your soar, upon it to the skies.

I meant to consider mercy, as a self-sufficient, distinct, operating excellence in the godhead ; the proper objects of which were those, who did not come within the merits of that repentance, which might intitle them to the justice defined in that letter. I am, my dearest Fanny, well aware, how little orthodox I am in this opinion ; and therefore call upon myself for some explanation on this subject, as I seem to make no difference between the good and bad, with regard to the unbounded mercy of God. In order to which, I shall make use of an allusion, by considering man in his life, like a silk-worm in its nymph-state, involved and incompassed round with toils of their own weaving ; the one waiting 'till God's blessing, as the other for a warm sun, shall rescue him to a joyful resurrection. Now some insects carry the seeds of death with them into the grave, and, consequently, perish immediately, without being able to revive to a new life : in which forlorn situation I consider a wicked man—and think I have some authority from Scripture for this hypothesis.

* “ The wages of sin are *death* ; but the gift
“ of the Lord is *eternal life*.”

* Romans, ch. 6. v. 23.

And again,

“ The Lord wisheth not the *death* of a sinner,
“ but rather, that he may turn from his wicked-
“ nefs, and *live*.”

Now, though the inflicting of punishments, as I have somewhere said, would, in some sort, deprive heaven of the full enjoyment of its own perfection; yet such a literal death, as I understand from these texts, that is, the intire deprivation of sense or being from a sinner, is not only agreeable to justice, but to mercy too; for “ they say, bad
“ men would be unblest in heaven:” And as this life is given us, in order to prepare our souls for the relish of that contemplative bliss which is hereafter to be permitted to the spirits of good men made perfect, it would be rather an instance of cruelty, than mercy, to grant immortality to those unhappy wretches, in a state of existence, which would not admit the gratifications of mortal senses, or the indulgence of human passions †.

As I am drawing toward the conclusion of Pliny’s works, I shall finish my remarks upon him, and his translator, in the remainder of this letter.

In a note upon the forty-sixth Epistle, *optimus viro* is called an idiom, but I cannot see for what reason: And my Lord might very well have rendered it literally, *the best of men*, without appearing the least stiff in the stile of that expression, as he apprehends.

Trajan’s speech, in the last part of the comment upon the fifty-first Epistle, puts me in mind of a humour of the widow Jacob, in this country;

† It was the opinion of the Stoic philosophy, that only the souls of good men subsisted after death; that the bad, perished totally, body and soul together, like a brute.

who

who was some time ago married, and the morning after, she appeared caparisoned with an horse-whip pinned to her girdle; and told her husband, she meant always to wear it about her, that it might be ready, whenever she deserved his chastisement.

In the sixty-seventh Epistle, read *since*, for *scarce*.

I have gone through the rest of this book, which finishes the volume, and find nothing more fit to be remarked upon, that is not already taken notice of by the commentator, much better than I can pretend to do; and this in general, is the reason, why I have made so few observations upon the whole work. As to the freedom I have taken, in some criticisms, both with the author, and his commentator, I shall excuse myself with a quotation out of the thirteenth Epistle of the third book: "If I find you so frank, as to make objections to particular passages, I shall take it for granted, that you are pleased with all the rest." And so indeed I am.

I think, the twentieth Epistle of the fourth book, would be proper to conclude these remarks with; changing the word *grief* for *sense*, and applying that letter to Pliny and Orrery.

And now let me assure you, my dear Fanny, that I feel a real concern, upon the close of this work, at parting with three such men, as Trajan, Pliny, and Orrery: But one I hope to know in this life, and shall die in trust of meeting the others in the next; and you, my best-loved girl, shall know them too:

"Together to the realms of bli's we'll go."

'Till then, let us live, and love; for, while we do one, I am sure we shall do the other.

Adieu, my heart's delight!

HENRY.

L E T T E R CLXXXII.

My dearest HARRY,

I AM vastly provoked at your not receiving my letters regularly: I am uneasy about my Saturday's letter, though the disappointment only, could make it of any consequence. As I have nothing extraordinary to say, at present, with regard to myself, and have not time to answer your's, I should not write to-night, but on account of the inclosed, which, I am sure, will give you pleasure, as my dear Lady ——'s sentiments correspond with your's. I have wrote a very long letter to her; and my fingers ach to such a degree, I can hardly hold the pen. I hope, I have now returned the compliment you paid me, by bringing her letter to ——.

We will prescribe the whole alphabet, only to very weak or very irascible people; for I think, the five vowels might serve to surmount any resentment, we could have to each other: However, if you like the * water-bottle best, I will always have one by my side.

Adieu, my love!

L E T T E R CLXXXIII.

My FANNY,

I RECEIVED your's, with Lady ——'s inclosed; and am pleased to find, she does not speak, like a courtier, to your pride, but addresses herself, like a philosopher and a friend, to your prudence. It is certain, that no man partakes of

* Alluding to a poem in the Tatler, a cure for a cold.

the lowness of his situation, while he appears above it : And the question in life is, not what part we acted, but how we performed it. What she says, is extremely just, “ † that misfortunes “ should be rather a spur, than a bridle, to us ; ” as a man exerts himself more in a bog, than upon terra firma ; and the noble mind, like a tennis-ball, always rises in proportion to its fall. Cæsar said bravely, that he would rather be the first man in a village, than the second at Rome ; and I would rather appear above a low part, than beneath a great one.

I am glad to find, that you have contracted the maxim of Athenodorus to the vowels ; though, by mentioning the *water-bottle*, I suspect you mean to add the *liquid* to them. Now I will cut the work still shorter ; for I will confine myself, not only to the vowels, but to two of them, in honour of ourselves : For I think, upon any such occasion, we need have regard but to U and I ; and, to shorten it still further, let us consider those two letters but as a diphthong.

I have been employed these three mornings in two of the most opposite amusements, that one can well imagine ; in sorting and reading all your charming letters, filled with kindness, love and truth, and pulling the grey hairs out of my head — Not, as one might conjecture, to leave myself yet the appearance of youth, sufficient to justify so much fondness, but for a very extraordinary reason ; to present my lively, gay, young love with a locket of them. You have several times wished, that I was many years older than I am ; in return for which, I shall dedicate every symptom of age to you still, as they appear.

† *Dei ressa resurgo* ; the motto of the palm tree.

- “ My fiddle, as my nerves unstrung,
- “ Venus, upon thy shrine be hung !
- “ Cupid, found a retreat.”

Now we are upon the subject of age, we may talk of the epitaphs, which I promised to frame for you and me. The two, I have thought of, are, “ *evfif*, I have escaped,” looking upon death in that philosophic light; and “ *permutatio felix* ! “ A happy exchange ! ” considering death as becomes a christian, the means of an exchange for immortality. I give you your choice of them; though, as I hope, and shall take care, that we shall be both laid under one stone, I will have them both inscribed, as of one sentence, to shew that in death, as well as life, I consider you part of myself—“ And in death they were not divided.” The epitaph then shall stand thus :

Evasimus—Permutatio felix !

In the name of God, Amen !

Believe me your's,

HENRY.

• A quotation from an ode of Horace, translated, and parodied by Henry.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

FRANCES to HENRY.

AS I am still in the same disagreeable way, with regard to my health, I would not write to my sweet love this night, but to prevent his apprehension of my being worse. There is something extremely odd in my disorder, as there is not the least alteration in it. Time has, however, lessened my feelings, but not abated my complaints. I own
I am

I am greatly alarmed at my illness; but I will not say more on a subject, which, I am sure, occasions you almost as much pain as me.

I will not, by any means, accept either of the epitaphs, you offer me, unless I should survive you. (What a thought was that!) Forgive me, heaven, when I say, thy joys, as far as my poor finite views can reach, could hardly counterpoise my Henry's loss. I will not, cannot bear to part with thee. My spirits are much too low, to be able to get the better of this melancholy reflection; and, believe me, Harry, fully certain as I am of the mercies of my Creator, I find no pang in the thoughts of dying; nor do I think I should find a sting in death itself, but that of being torn from thee, my life, my soul, my immortality! and could I call it "an escape, a blest exchange?" ah! no:—I must want much of that passionate regard I feel for thee, ere I can think it bliss to part from you. I'll not endure the thought.

I hope, indeed, you will take care to see me laid in some place, where death shall not divide our poor remains; "where thou, with frequent eyes, "my sepulchre may'st see!" Oh! grant, thou good, thou great, all merciful, and all-glorious God, that the last object, which I view on earth, may be my Henry! that he may close my eyes, "and smooth my passage to the realms of day!"

I gladly accept of every mark of age, which it shall ever be in your power to devote to me, provided they give no hints of your mortality. I own I rejoice at every pain, or sickness, that I feel, which seems to promise I shall not be left behind; for I can much better bear the thoughts of quitting you, than of your leaving me.

Adieu, my life! my love! believe me your's 'till death, and ever after.

FRANCES.

LETTER CLXXXV.

I AM almost angry with my sweet love for not attributing his disappointment to any cause, rather than my neglect. I did indeed write, by Saturday's post, to Lady —, to Kitty, and to you. How extremely rude must Lady — think me; as there is no doubt but all my letters miscarried! I am vastly uneasy about them, but particularly for her's, it being of most consequence.

I join with you in thinking that friendship not only allows the privilege of communicating our inmost thoughts, and of acknowledging the honest pride we feel from the exercise of any moral virtue, but that it is a breach of that noble intercourse to conceal even our faults or foibles. For my part, I have shewn my heart as naked to thy view, as to the eye of heaven. Real friendship, like true love, is understood by very few, yet common in the mouths of every one. It can only be conceived by minds capable of the most refined and disinterested sentiments: "Reserve will wound it, and distrust destroy;" and this makes "friends such rareties below." I think, that persons of different sexes, who, with a tolerable understanding, have had a sincere affection for each other, are most likely to be capable of real friendship; for even the remains of love will create a gentleness in our manners, and complacency of behaviour; the want of which is too often the effect and bane of common friendships. I declare solemnly, I have felt a higher satisfaction in considering myself as your first friend, than ever I did in thinking myself the object of your affection. I know myself capable of retaining your esteem, because I will never do any thing to forfeit it; and therefore I receive *greater pleasure from any mark of your confidence,*
than

than from the fondest expressions of your love—Not but I shall ever wish to preserve that too, as I have paid the price for it, by giving mine; but we are, in general, fonder of what we have no right to, than what is justly our's.

There is no part of your character so much in-dears you to me, as the tenderness and humanity of your disposition. I have actually felt the same transport in thinking of it, as you have done in the exercise; my heart has trembled, and eyes overflowed with pleasure, as if I had done some generous or humane act myself.

I do assure you, that often in the extreme fondness of my heart, when I have looked at, and heard you with the sincerest delight, I have been ready to burst into tears, from reflecting that the happiness, I then enjoyed, might some time prove an aggravation of my misery; and sure there is no anguish equal to that, which arises from our departed joys. I do not remember I was ever so much affected at any thing I read, as at a passage of Young's, which I met with during the interregnum of our loves.

“ And she was mine; and I was—was most
“ blest'd!

“ Gay title of the deepest misery!”

But I will have done with this melancholy subject; and I sincerely hope it will never more occur to my remembrance.

Your brother and sister have been with me all day; so that I must quit you sooner than I would. Set down all the blots and blunders to their account; for though my thoughts are fixed on you, yet being obliged to converse with them, makes both my hands and eyes to wander. They have been vastly civil to me, since I came to town.

I in-

I intreat you will inquire about my Saturday's letter; and believe me, my dearest life,

Your sincerest, and most affectionate friend,

FRANCES.

A letter is wanting, which this also answers.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

HENRY to FRANCES.

Musæum.

I AM concerned at the account of your health.

You say you do not know what ails you; but that you are sick, and have lost your appetite, and spirits. Now take it thus, and you will find the true state of your disorder: You have lost your spirits; consequently your appetite; and then it is no wonder you are sick. But the cause of this progression is yet to be related; namely, the fretting, you have humoured yourself in, upon this late occasion. I wish, my dear Fanny, I could make you as good a philosopher in practice, as you are in theory. You have made me both; for which I am more beholden to you, than to my mother for my birth. She made me but an animal; you have made me a man.

I desire you will send me Lady ——'s letter, when you have answered it. I am interested in the smallest circumstance relating to you, and am vain of every compliment paid you.

I think there is something very pretty in your sentiments about friendship. You have carried the thought farther, than I had ever considered it, by saying, even our faults, or foibles, we should not hide, in such an intercourse; but I think there
is

is even a certain honesty in such an open dealing ; for friendship, such as deserves that name, is an union for life ; and, as in the meaner partnerships of trade, we should reveal the drawbacks of debts, or insufficiencies upon our stock, how much more nice ought we to be in this noble and generous society ! I think, with you, that persons of different sexes are most likely to preserve the best, and most lasting friendships ; and really believe, that, in the very few marriage states, which can be deemed happy, the most perfect concords of this kind are to be found. That gentleness of manners, and complacency of behaviour, which you mention, may be considered as the essence of virtue, rather than the mere ornament of it ; and the French writers treat of them in this pretty light, under the title of “ *Les petites Morales.*” If strict philosophy will not admit of this expression, they may certainly be allowed the marks of the most amiable virtues ; as they are sure signs of goodness, humility, and humanity. As some of the sages said, that virtue need but put on a visible form, to bewitch mankind with her charms, I think, that, what is meant by the term, good-breeding, must certainly be the dress, she would appear in. Mere naked virtue, perhaps, may be a fit contemplation for an angel ; but she must be clothed, with decency, to be admired by man. A blessed spirit, as it has no “ sense to ake,” can bear the transcendent splendor of truth ; but her glory is too dazzling for the human mind to bear without a veil ; as we look at the sun through a smoked glass, and are obliged to use shades, to mark the beauties of proportion.

Upon this occasion, has happily occurred to me, part of the most noble description of the state of the blessed, that can be conceived ; though it was imagined, by an unenlightened heathen ; Plotinus,
a phi-

a philosopher of the Platonic sect. A translation will serve you, as well as the original.

“ In heaven, the blessed inhabitants enjoy a
 “ happy tranquillity, having truth itself for the
 “ author of their being, for their essence and support. They see things there, not only as they
 “ are produced, but contemplate them in their first
 “ principles, and behold themselves in those about
 “ them; for there, all things are obvious and
 “ perspicuous, nothing obscure, nothing opposite;
 “ All is conspicuous to all, intrinsic throughout;
 “ for light every-where blends with light: Every
 “ one has every thing in himself, and beholds the
 “ same in others: All things then are every-where,
 “ and immense splendor shines through all: Motion
 “ there, is perfectly pure; for one motion
 “ does not impede another: Rest also there, is
 “ never disturbed by change; for it is not blended
 “ with unstable nature: There, dwells beauty in
 “ the abstract, independent of form, or matter.
 “ We may further presume, that those, who behold
 “ these things, can never be fatigued in the
 “ contemplation of them; nor can any satiety occur,
 “ to occasion any fatigue; for there will be
 “ no emptiness in any one, which, by being filled
 “ and satiated, may put an end to their enjoyment.”

I have here given you the sense of this beautiful passage; though, I am afraid, I have but poorly imitated the spirit of it. The whole author is extremely fine; and this is but a very small part of the great description, he has so gloriously attempted; but it was all, which fairly occurred to me upon the subject of this letter, and, as I thought, had some relation to it.

Adieu !

HENRY.

LETTER CLXXXVII.

HENRY to FRANCES.

My dearest Life,

I AM much alarmed about your disorder, and extremely concerned at it. For heaven's sake, take care of yourself. Go early to bed, though you lie awake three hours after it; and get up early, though you should be obliged to doze in the middle of the day for it. Consider, my heart's passion, my mind's reflection, my life's happiness, and my soul's hope, that all these precious concerns depend upon you, and are employed about you. If I had a more favourite scheme in view, than your felicity, or imagined to myself any transport, but through that means, you might then, perhaps, be at liberty to trifle away your time and health, upon persons who have neither sense or taste enough to conceive your merits, nor tenderness or love to be affected by them. Remember now, my warmest wish, that I trust you with yourself; and surely the high confidence of so dear a pledge deserves, at least, that it shall not be impaired in your keeping.

Since you do not approve of my epitaphs, I beg you will frame others more to your fancy; or, rather, let the actions of our lives form the mottos for our graves. It was finely said of Socrates, when called upon by his judges to make his defence, "I have been doing nothing else all my life." Montaigne observes, very justly, upon the subject of death, "that the philosophy of the schools but increases, by præpensity the terrors of it; and only prepares us for the preparation." What signifies all the sophistry, deduced from the consideration of the mortality of
out

our state, that we had life itself, but upon these conditions, "that death, a necessary end, will come when it will come?" with other quibbles of the same kind.—The only way to make ready for death, is to prepare our lives for it. Actions, not words, can comfort us at such a crisis.

After so solemn a subject as this, it may appear light to mention such a trifle, as I am going to speak of, but that, in truth, though I expect to be laughed at, I have some scruples of conscience about it. There is a butterfly in my study, which would be dead some time past, but that I watched it, at the end of the season, and have frequently revived it by the warmth of my breath, every day since; and you cannot conceive the pleasure I receive, when I feel it flutter in my hand, upon such occasions. By this means I have prolonged it's life beyond the date of butterflies. Now perhaps I am counteracting the order of Providence, and may deserve the punishment of Prometheus, for stealing fire from heaven, to animate his man of clay: Perhaps too, I am but making this poor insect linger out a life in pain; for I believe no creature, but man, ever received pleasure from any thing which was contrary to nature. In short, I begin to fancy I am guilty of such a cruelty, as the keeping a man awake all night, by way of adding so many hours to his day. Should any physician discover an elixir, which might equal our lives to the age of Patriarchs, would he not deserve to have his own cut short, for tempting men to cheat themselves of some portion of a glorious immortality, merely to lengthen out some years of misery, here below? The Gymnosophists have a fine sentiment? that we are, in this life, but in a state of conception; and that death is our delivery. A man then, who has lived beyond the bounds prescribed by nature, may, perhaps, be considered, in the next
life,

life, as a præternatural birth. For my part, I desire not to die before the ordinary fate of human nature; but, at the same time, wish, with Horace,

“Nec turpem senectutem degere,”

Not to consume a loathsome age.

Adieu, my life! remember your health, and remember me.

HENRY.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.
FRANCES to HENRY.

THE passage you quote from Plotinus, is indeed a fine one. I have never met with any thing, which gives so strong, and beautiful an idea of a future state. What a disgrace to our modern philosophers and divines, who have the light of revealed religion for their guide, to be so far outdone by the noble spirit and blaze, of unenlightened heathenism.

I look upon *Les petites morales* to be as absolutely necessary, to make a man happy in this life, as true morality, to intitle him to, or render him capable of happiness in the next.

There is something so extremely elegant and tender in the first part of your second letter, as would render life pleasing, under the severest agonies, if, by enduring them, I might repay such goodness. Indeed, thou dearest, kindest, best of men, I will do all I can for the recovery and preservation of that health, whose only charm to me is, being dear to you. I wish I could tell you I was better. I think I grow worse every day; but I do not make the least doubt of my recovery, for there is *nothing dangerous* in my disorder; though I suffer

suffer more than I thought my constitution could possibly bear. I am convinced I should mend, immediately, if you were with me. This may appear childish; but sick folks and children are fanciful alike. Tell me then, thou dear physician to my soul and body, when wilt thou give me new life and health? I consider myself in the same situation as the little butterfly you mention, insensible to every thing round me: or rather, like Prometheus's man of clay,

- * "I stand unmov'd, and wait, in dull suspense,
 "Thy heavenly charms; to warm me into sense."

I can, no more than you, determine, whether it is kind, or cruel, to prolong the life of your little favourite. What does it subsist on, during the time of its natural existence? If you know, and can provide it with natural sustenance, we may suppose it dies only for want of the sun's heat; then, to revive it with an artificial warmth cannot be cruelty: But if it's food, as I believe, be of the summer's pride, and is not now to be found in the vegetable world, I fear the poor little insect suffers by your fondness, as annihilation is preferable to misery. Besides, I fancy a butterfly does not die; but, according to the Pythagorean system, changes its form and being. This I am not quite clear in; though I have met with some poetical simile, that warrants this opinion

To consider our present state of existence, as rational beings, who hope for a glorious immortality, it must appear the highest act of folly to aim at lengthening it, even for a moment: it is as absurd, as to suppose a prisoner should desire to continue in a dungeon, when he may have liberty to quit it, and enjoy all the delights of life: yet

* See Letter LXIV.

were there any person, who had been born and bred in such a dismal situation, that had entered into ties and connections with wretches as unhappy as himself, he would, I dare say, feel a strong reluctance at entering into a happier state, when he must part from those, who had been partners in his misery, and all the solace of it. So we, though Providence has wisely ordered, that disappointments, pain, and loss of friends should, by degrees, unloose the hold we take of this dim spot; that our loves, our friendships, should be torn asunder; that even our desires and passions should decay, and leave us scarce a wish on earth; yet stripped of, and abandoned by all, that makes life pleasing; left, as it were, naked, on a barren shore; when we have nothing else to grasp at, we lay hold on our own frail and feverish beings, and seem to find a *pain*, in being separated from *pain*.

There are five or six people talking round me. It is impossible for me to know what I write: but this I know, that I live but in the earnest hope of being your's, here and hereafter.

FRANCE 9.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

My dear FANNY,

YOU may see, by my paper, that I am not at home, and consequently have not your last letter with me, to answer; therefore you can expect no other reason for my writing to you now, but to shew you I would not neglect it, even for one post, though unprepared with my best help, your love-inspiring, sense-inditing epistles.

The family of ——— dined with me to-day, and hurried me home with them this evening. I would

would have excused myself, but that I avoid the appearance of any thing which looks queer; and I am apt to suspect, that a person has but the appearance of sense, courage, or philosophy, who affects to manifest them upon trifling occasions. I declare that I have of late, so entirely given myself up to the charming pleasures of solitude, that I begin to endure company, as one plays a bad hand of cards, not for the enjoyment of the sport, but merely to keep one's self within the game. This turn of mind has sometimes so alarmed me, that I have argued the point with myself, pro and con; but have declared for the pleasure of retired and philosophic leisure upon this reasoning, that it is possible some accident or misfortune of life may hereafter deprive me of the enjoyment of society; for few and rare friends are found at the poor, the sick, or the prisoner's levee; but death alone can rob me of the heart approving, rational joys of solitude. If I quitted the *converse* of the world out of an austereity of manners, or a severity of morals, I might justly appear in the uncouth and unphilosophic light of a misanthrope; but when I retire, in order to prepare myself for a *better*, I seem to myself to act the part of one, who takes a larger scope in view, than the scanty horizon of this narrow globe. I retire, to converse with you, and to make assignations with thee, my charming seraph, where I shall have myriads of unjealous rivals in thy love, in the harmony of thy sense and virtue. It is you alone, who can make me endure society; as it was you only, who have inspired me with those helps, which can enable me to live alone. You need not be apprehensive, that such abstracted speculations as these, can ever abate the warmth of my affection to you; for what is my love to my dearest Fanny, but that *taste* for virtue, which I *hinted at in a former letter*, and that high admiration

tion for beauty, harmony, and order, which is the proper contemplation of the truly philosophic mind? So that even my relish for every thing that is amiable, may be considered but as a part of that love and esteem, which I bear to you.

I slipt away from cards to write to you; and the bell rings for supper: so I must unwillingly conclude my letter; though most willingly conclude myself, my charming girl,

Ever your's,

HENRY.

LETTER CXc.

FRANCES to HENRY.

I DO not, indeed, think it would be possible for me to support myself, under the very disagreeable situation I am in, both of body and mind, were it not for the pleasure I receive from my dear, dear life's kind letters. I own I am jealous of solitude; and cannot help being uneasy, when I think your fondness for that must, by degrees, lessen your love for me: and, should I ever be so happy as to live with you, my company or converse may appear an interruption to your scheme of life: It will of course grow distasteful, and I unhappy. I only speak my fears, not my opinion; for that shall always be guided by you; nor will I doubt your love, your truth, and constancy.

I am vastly alarmed at hearing, from your brother, you do not intend coming to town. I will not believe you could form so unkind a resolution: pray answer me directly, will you come, or no? and when, if you do come, may I expect to see you? You cannot conceive what a shock this report gave me. My whole life is, indeed, spent in
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waiting for you : I count every hour an age, 'till we meet, and would gladly † “imp the wings of “time, which thy absence clips.” I rejoice, every night, that a day is passed, and that I am so much nearer the happy æra, I had fondly fixed for our meeting. In short, I should have no idea of time or its limits, but from the expectation of seeing you. Yet, notwithstanding my earnest desire, let me intreat you not to think of coming, unless it be quite convenient to you.

Though I object, from selfish views, to my dear Harry's love of solitude, I perfectly agree with him in thinking the generality of people and conversations we meet with, to be mostly disagreeable ; at best, trifling and insipid, and quite incapable of affording that delight, which should arise from the converse of rational and immortal beings ; yet do I think life would become irksome, and every virtue stagnate in our souls, were they not called into action by a desire of being approved by some particular person.

“ Nature, in zeal for human amity,
 “ Denies, or damps an undivided joy :
 “ 'Tis converse qualifies for solitude,
 “ As exercise, for salutary rest :
 “ By that untutor'd, contemplation raves
 “ A lunar prince, or famish'd beggar dies ;
 “ And Nature's fool, by Wisdom's, is outdone.
 “ Needful auxiliary is a friend, to give
 “ To social man true relish of himself ;
 “ Full on ourselves descending, in a line,
 “ Pleasure's bright beam is feeble in delight ;
 “ Delight intense is taken by rebound ;
 “ Reverberated pleasure fires the breast.
 “ Celestial Happiness, whene'er she stoops

† Alluding to the ode in letter LXIV.

“ To

"To visit earth, one shrine the goddess finds,
 "And one alone, to make her sweet amends
 "For absent heav'n—the bosom of a friend :
 "Where heart meets heart, reciprocally soft,
 "Each other's pillow to repose divine."

Oh! were I capable of being that pleasing, kind and rational companion to my Henry, my bliss would be complete. I would, with transport, quit the world this moment, if I might be partaker of thy solitude in the most distant desert; nor cast a wish, a sigh, or thought, away on aught on earth;—for thou to me art all. And yet, perhaps, we never shall spend a single day together, in that delightful, undisturbed, peaceful retirement, which we both pant after.—My spirits were low before: this thought has sunk them quite.

Adieu, my dearest love! I am still sick: still yours.

FRANCES.

L E T T E R CXCI.

My dear giddy girl,

I SEND you, inclosed, the cover of your last letter, which you see was sent without a seal. Through what perusals it has passed I cannot say; but am glad it has escaped the Cotton library of manuscripts, to arrive safe to my hands, at last.

You have no reason to apprehend, that my fondness for retirement can ever seclude you from my society: that taste, or turn of mind, which gives me a disrelish to conversation in general, does but create in me a stronger impatience for the enjoyment of your's in particular. I own that my passion for solitude has grown very strong in me of late; but *must* confess, that I should chuse to

carry it no farther, than to that blessed state, which Adam rejoiced in, between the last creation and his fall :

“ Adam relating, the sole auditress.”

I agree with you that the approbation we expect from virtuous actions, is a very high incitement to them ; and the love of fame, so strongly implanted in all mankind, has always appeared to me a very good proof of the soul's existence after death, even of its eternal existence : For, as this is a passion, which nothing less than immortality can gratify, it would be impiously charging Providence with inspiring us with a desire, which we were never designed to possess the enjoyment of, were we to exclude the hope of an hereafter.

As the immortality of the soul, and the existence of a God, have been often made use of, as reciprocal proofs, I shall add a few words, upon this last subject, to the many excellent arguments, more at large insisted upon by divines. If infidels, or sceptics deny, or doubt the certainty of an intelligent Providence, yet surely the belief of it ought to be received, as we give credit to the Copernican system ; if not for its demonstration, at least, because this hypothesis accounts for all the phenomena of the celestial bodies ; which would otherwise appear a heap of wild incoherence : And rashly to deny a thing, because we cannot comprehend it, is such a Pyrrhonism, as to affirm we cannot see, because we are not sufficiently informed how we see : for to say we see by our eyes, is unphilosophical ; for our eyes are but the organs of sight ; that is, the instrument, not the cause. In looking up through the chain of effects, our reason hesitates at a certain period, which we presume to be the first cause ; though, beyond our comprehension, the links may be infinite, before
they

they reach the first Cause; and then, to say we cannot comprehend that first Cause, is but a sort of definition of it; for, if we could comprehend it, it could not be what we must suppose it.

Ever since you attacked me so well upon my hint, that, perhaps, there was as little analogy as comparison, between the virtues of man, and the attributes of God, I have been revolving that subject in my mind; for we should have reasons, even for our doubts, in so high a matter; and the more I consider it, the more am I confirmed in an opinion, which was but a surmise, at first. If we stick to the religion of nature, we can, indeed, only say, perhaps there may be no relation between them; but when we come down to revelation, we shall find many express authorities to support my argument; two of which I think sufficient to produce. What notions of justice can the human mind supply us with, for the curse derived to all mankind from original sin? Then, again, part of the second commandment says, "I will visit the
 " sins of the fathers upon the children, to the
 " third and fourth generation of them that hate
 " me," &c. What human equity is there in this? Is not the crime of *bating God*, in the proper sense of that expression, sufficient to incur the punishments denounced against the wicked, without involving us in our parents guilt *? Perhaps it was from such instances as these in Scripture, that the Papists have deduced their absurd doctrine of supererogation; for, if we are to be damned by another's sin, it may be reasonably implied, that

* That the sins of the fathers were visited upon the children, for several generations, was an opinion of the Heathen world, as well as of the Jews. Among many authorities, read the epode, which concludes the sixth act of the *Electra* of Sophocles.

we may be saved by another's merits. Upon the whole, I shall conclude with another passage from the Scriptures, "that the wisdom of man is but foolishness in the sight of God." Away, then, with all presumptuous reasonings of this kind; but let us submit our minds to faith, and begirt ourselves to good works.

Adieu, my heart's delight! my soul's desire! Say you are well, in your next letter; and then say you have obliged me.

HENRY.

LETTER CXCH.

My dear FANNY,

Belmont.

I RECEIVED no letter from you last post, and cannot know whether I shall hear from you by this, 'till I return to-morrow to Maidenhall. It was unkind in you to neglect writing, when you knew how uneasy I must be to have some account of your health. I saw Kitty yesterday, who heard from some of her friends; and, by not mentioning you, I hope this omission was not owing to your disorder.

I had a wild night of it, coming here, and have not been so wet, since I was last in the river. I had no cloaths with me, but what I had on my back; so I have betaken myself to my bed; from whence I am now writing to you, and drinking your health, and my own too, in milk-whey. My *kind* landlady, who is also my tenant, upon notice of my coming here to-day, has washed my sheets in the morning, and my room in the evening, to make me welcome.

I observed an extraordinary phenomenon, as I came along. The night was extremely dark, and *the rain fell* excessively: notwithstanding which,
the

the whole mountain, I rode over, seemed to be on fire, with such an ember light, as is seen after the blaze of a bonfire is gone out. I asked my guide the meaning of it, (whom I hired at the foot of the hill) and he told me, that all the heathy grounds hereabouts have this appearance, by night. This is certainly a very great natural curiosity; but what I never observed, or heard of before. If this were real fire, it might put this part of the country into a terrible combustion, as the collieries happen to meet in the center of these hills.

This thought led me insensibly on to the consideration of the general conflagration, which is prophesied in Scripture; and which our faith makes us expect, at a certain period, from some extraordinary act of divine power; but which I never heard accounted for, from the philosophy of nature, as it stands at present. I shall therefore amuse you, and myself, with an hypothesis for this purpose; and may some time or other, hereafter, refer it to wiser heads than ours, whether there be any real weight in this whimsical opinion of mine, or no.

* I must first give you a short account of astronomy. This globe of earth, as well as all the planets of our solar system, revolves about the sun; which rotation is effected from the compounding of two different powers; the Centripetal, which is the common gravity of bodies, that mutually attract each other, and, if acting alone, would occasion the earth to be swallowed up by the sun; and the Centrifugal, which is a force impulsed upon all the planets, at their creation, that directs them forward, in a right line, and, if not counteracted by the first power, would propel the body

* See Henry's letter to the Editor, last paragraph but two.

on, through infinite space, to all eternity. Now both these powers acting, by the almighty œconomy, upon our earth, at the same time, occasion a motion compounded of both; every revolution of which is performed, in that period of time, that is called a year. From what I have said it is plain, that, if the Centrifugal power was taken away, the earth must rush into the sun, and so be destroyed by fire†. But this would be a particular act of the Almighty; and my philosophy is to explain the possibility and probability of this effect, by plain and natural means; which I apprehend may be occasioned by increasing the weight of the earth, and consequently it's gravitating powers: For I think natural philosophers agree, that bodies attract, in proportion to their quantity of matter; which, at a certain degree, will make the Centripetal overcome the Centrifugal force. Now my opinion is, that every living creature, man, brute, insect, &c. which has been produced since the creation, has made an addition of so much matter to the earth, as it's weight came to at it's birth. The increase of bulk, during it's life, I make no account of, because that proceeds from the consumption of the fruits of the earth, which drawing their nourishment from the earth itself, alters only the form, not the specific gravity; but that weight, which the creature brings into the world, is certainly an addition, because the parent neither eats or drinks more, to bring the fœtus to perfection, than if she were not pregnant; and, if tried in

† There was a philosophy, that might have accounted for this event, in another way: Water was said to be the increment of plants, which perishing, turn'd to earth. If this was true, the element of water must be annihilated, in a certain given time, and leave the element of fire without controul. But this philosophy is exploded; earth is the augment, water only the vehicle.

scales,

cales, would be found to be of equal weight, before, and after—except in the case of sickness, or hard labour ; neither of which is the natural consequence of procreation ; as may be observed from brutes, and other animals ; and from the generality of the human species too, who have not weakened or debauched their natural forces by luxury, effeminacy, or excess. I have no library here, so must be excused, if I am not as full, and as correct, upon this subject, as I might be, if I were among my books : But I always write to you in the same loose manner that things occur to my mind at first thought ; and often but just enter down hints, to supply us with topics for conversation, when we are together.

I am particularly pleased at this hypothesis presenting itself to my reflection ; as the explanation of any prophecy, by natural means, is a stronger motive to our belief, than the mere faith of it, from a miracle. Now the destruction of the world by fire was denounced, as I apprehend, long before the laws of astronomy, or the gravitation of matter, were sufficiently known, to authorize such an hypothesis as this ; and, as I am not quite orthodox in some points, I own that I heartily rejoice, when I can make amends in others ; and, in reasoning about religion, or contemplating the ways of providence, I think we ought, in a stronger and more particular manner, to apply an observation, which I remember out of Longinus : That, in reading of Homer, Plato, or any of those precious spirits of antiquity, when any passages occur, to which we cannot readily reconcile our reason, we ought firmly to believe that, were those great Genii present to explain themselves, we should, to our confusion, be convinced, that we only were guilty of those errors, which we blindly charged upon them.

I think I may now lay myself down to sleep, esteeming this essay in the place of a prayer : And may I have the blessing of it in my dreams, by meeting you there in perfect health !

* " Have I not seen thee where thou hast not
" been ? " &c.

Adieu !

L E T T E R CXCIIL.

My dearest life,

N O words can express the distracted situation of my mind, nor give you any idea of the ill treatment I have received from —. Indeed, neither my health nor spirits can hold out much longer ; but I will do all I can to support myself under the complicated pains of body and mind, which I at present feel, 'till I see you ; then gladly part with them and life together.

" So, 'till the day was won, the Greek re-
" nown'd,

" With anguish, wore the arrow in his wound ;

" Then pluck'd the weapon from his tortur'd
" side,

" Let rush the torrent of his blood, and dy'd."

I know you will condemn me for letting my spirits sink ; but, as you do not know the cause, let not my sweet love judge too harshly from the effects. A little time will clear me from the imputation of wanting either philosophy or religion : Indeed the latter is my only refuge. I am sure the Almighty will never forsake me. I know too he orders all things right, and that my present distress may be

* *Young's Revenge.*

pro-

productive of my future happiness. In the sincerity of my heart, I bless the hand that chasteneth; and can say, from my inmost soul, His will, not mine, be done! Yet still, as a frail mortal, I cannot help feeling I am hurt, and complaining to you (though I do not repine); for “sighs, and tears, “by nature, grow on pain.”

Your account of your journey to Belmont, and manner of lying there, has made me vastly uneasy. If you have one grain of affection for me, you will take care to preserve my life, my health, my happiness, for they are all bound up, and centered in my dearest Harry's.

I met with a very severe shock from the account of Mrs. P——'s death. There is yet no certainty of it; but I much fear it is too true. They say she died in child-bed. It is very possible those barbarians, she was among, have murdered her—vile wretches! I have not patience with them: Better they had all died, than my poor, dear friend! Her failings are now forgotten: Nay, I know not that she had any: but I am sure she had a thousand virtues. Oh! she is happy! But her poor little children! those Hottentots will kill them.—I wish it were in my power to serve them.

Adieu, my heart's dear Harry! While I am myself, I shall be your's.

FRANCES.

LETTER CXCIV.

My dearest life,

YOUR letter of the 9th has given me a great deal of concern. Represent your situation particularly to Lady ——; for to me you have spoken only in general terms; and strictly follow

her friendly and considerate advice. My fortunes shall be your's, so use them freely; and that I did not offer this before, was from a regard to your character, which I have very nice and proper reasons to be tender of. I could, with pleasure, wear sackcloth, and live on bread and water, "to cloath you in purple, and make you fare sumptuously every day." In short, I am such an adventurer in this world, that if I have luck, there's nothing in it; and if not, no oeconomy can save my fortunes. A year's industry will not make me rich; but a minute's reflection can reconcile me to poverty. The utmost diligence can but establish that fund, which may be thought necessary to this life, and which Socrates or Pliny needs not, at present: But let us cultivate that treasure, which will supply us to eternity, and may help us to bear a part with those precious spirits; who are happy before us.

Your sentiment is both philosophic and religious, "that your present distress may produce your future happiness." Socrates said, he owed all his philosophy to his wife. Every man should endeavour to be a philosopher, not so much to support himself in death, as to be able to endure life; and, when misfortunes or mortifications come upon us, instead of repining, we should thank Providence for the lucky occasions of exercising that virtue. A wretched man has greater scope for virtue, than a happy man; and a poor man, than a rich.

I could say a great deal more upon this subject; but I would not prevent your own reflections.

Adieu, my heart's delight!

HENRY.

L E T T E R CXC.V.

I AM infinitely obliged to my dear Harry for his very affectionate letter. Though I am far from doubting your love or constancy; yet I receive fresh pleasure from every new assurance of both; as one is pleased to hear good news repeated, though it does not want *confirmation*.

Adversity is certainly the school of virtue and of wisdom. We feel our own defects; and, by the loss of any happiness or advantage, first discover our own unworthiness and His goodness, who gave that, and every other blessing which we enjoy. For my own part, I will say, with the psalmist, "it is good for me that I have been afflicted."

Though your dear letter has made me vastly easier than I was, I am not yet calm enough to write about my affairs to Lady —; besides, I am unwilling to determine on any thing, 'till I see, and consult you.

Adieu!

FRANCES.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CXC.VI.

My dear HARRY,

I AM sorry any accident should prevent our letters from passing in a regular course: Indeed it is of little consequence what becomes of mine, but as they may occasion a disappointment to you.

You desire to know what affects my mind.—It would be impossible to recount the multiplicity of things, which distress me.—It is true, there is a cause painfully eminent above the rest, which,
when

when we meet, I fear you will think too soon to know ; * 'till then, the sorrow it occasions, shall be all my own : “ For it is the wretch’s comfort
 “ still to have some little hoard of grief, some
 “ unknown woe ; which they may weep, and
 “ wail, and, glutton-like, devour alone.”

Indeed, my dearest life, I would rather suffer any thing than distress you. I am sincerely sorry, I even mentioned my illness to you ; but I will complain no more, therefore pardon what is past.

I have been in a continual hurry all day : it is now very late ; so must conclude with wishing you a thousand times good night !

* She was breeding.

A second letter is missing here.

LETTER CXCVII.

HENRY to FRANCES.

My dearest life,

I SENT off an express to Kilkenny, and recovered your letter of the third. I return you Lady O——’s letter, which is very kind. You cannot imagine what pleasure your saying she stays here for the winter has given me. It is a very lucky, as well as pleasing circumstance for you, at this particular time ; which is enough to shew you, how happy this account has made me. * * *

* * * * *

I shall go to town in the beginning of the term ; but am extremely uneasy to know what is the meaning of the hint, you gave me in your last letter, “ that you have something to say to me,
 “ which

"which you will not mention, 'till we meet." I beg, my Fanny, you will explain yourself by next post.

I am now returned to Montaigne, which I quitted for Pliny, at your request; and I make it a rule to give you my observations upon every book I read.

In his history of the three most excellent men, he names Homer, Alexander, and Epaminondas. By excellence, here, he seems merely to consider this expression, with regard to fame only: But I think he has not, as one might expect, given us examples from different classes. The first is a poet, the second a soldier, and so is the third, when I expected a philosopher; and here I would name Plato, or better, Socrates: But perhaps Montaigne considered Epaminondas in this class, and in the highest degree, as he is recorded to have practised what others only teach.

Montaigne makes a good defence for representing human nature not much to its advantage; as, in general, the French writers are apt to do: "*Others make men, I but report them.*"

I am pleased to find he had some of my whims: He mentions one, which, you may remember, I sometimes hinted to you; of taking a particular fancy to some one glass laid down at table, though of equal dimensions with the rest, out of which I often take a great pleasure in drinking; nay, I have gone so far, once or twice, as to pay a man's club for the exchange of his glass. Whence such caprices as this proceed, I do not remember that any of the expostors upon human nature have accounted: and I think it would be an ingenious and amusing subject to inquire into.

This puts me in mind of a theme, I have a great mind to recommend for a premium to the society

of * Dijon in France; which is an essay upon Metaphorical Taste; being a liking, or admiration, not confined to, or deducible from the established rules of beauty, harmony, order, or truth, which should be the natural or rational foundations of our approbation. Why is the mind of man, when endued with what is called *taste*, delighted with extravagant flights in poetry, extraordinary metaphors, excesses in grammar, chromatics in music, &c. How come we to be charmed with things, which offend common sense, or shock the natural ear? Nay, to shew that taste is not only above, but even sometimes averse from rational admiration, we need but recollect the pleasure we receive from viewing some of the deformities of nature, as rocks, precipices, &c. and at the same time remember, that we are sensible of a certain horror, during the contemplation.

Have you seen that piece, which carried the last premium at Dijon, upon this thesis, Whether the re establishment of arts and sciences has contributed to the refinement of manners? I have read it, and like the side of the question he has chosen, by denying it. I think, the subject might have been handled more at large, and to better advantage, than the author has done there.

*Quid juvat innumeros scire atque evolvere casus,
Si fugienda facis, et facienda fugis?*

What does it import us to know the springs of good and ill, while “ we do those things, which
“ we ought not to have done, and leave undone
“ those things, which we ought to have done?”
I have not yet seen the answer to it; but, when I

* This academy proposed Theses, and offered premiums for the best discourses upon the subjects.

have,

have, I shall probably determine the dispute like Sir Roger de Coverley, by concluding "that much may be said on both sides."

What the Genevan says of learning with regard to morals, I have often said of it with regard to understanding—That it has so over-loaded the mind of man, that, like too full a stomach, the digestive powers have not room to exert themselves; or it has confined our reflections, by setting bounds to our inquiries, or given us a bias out of the right road, by obliging us to think too much after one another, and following in a beaten track. When reason attempts to exercise herself in the mind of the learned, she finds it, like a storehouse, so filled with the old trumpery of the antients, that she has hardly room to stretch her limbs. I am for recurring up to the original of all things, and drinking truth at the fountain-head; not quenching my thirst of knowledge in polluted streams. Rivers, in passing through populous cities, acquire indeed a softness and a richness, but lose the sweetness and purity, which they brought from their spring. If you want to inform yourself of art or science, withdraw to your study; if of truth or nature, retire within yourself. Reading should be your exercise, but reflection your study. Sense is a bottle of essence, which loses its strength by dilatation; or like a wedge of gold, which, hammered into plates, or drawn into wire, extends its dimensions, but weakens its substance.

Adieu my life!

HENRY.

A second letter is missing here.

LETTER CXCVIII.

FRANCES to HENRY.

ROCHEFOUCAULT says, "In the adversity of our best friends we find something that does not displease us." I will not absolutely say this maxim is verified in you; yet I cannot help observing, with what vast calmness you have endured my misfortunes. I do indeed believe, that the distresses of others furnish the best opportunity for exerting our philosophy.

"When they are lash'd, we kiss the rod,
"Resigning to the will of God:"

And then we have such a charming superiority by making light of those misfortunes, which do not affect ourselves. But I should be glad to see one of our modern philosophers endure the loss of health with that indifference, they recommend to others.

If Lady O—— stays in the kingdom, which is yet doubtful, she will not come to Dublin the whole winter. I heartily wish she may hold her resolution of staying at ——, as I hope and believe I shall spend some time with her; for I am absolutely determined not to continue here long. When we meet, you shall know my reasons; which, I fancy, will be sufficient to make you entirely of my opinion: in the mean time, I shall exert the little strength of body and mind, I have left, to bear up against the distresses of both, without complaining. I must intreat, for the present, you will not desire any explanation from me; for I am resolved not to enter into particulars, 'till

Y^r Sec^y

I see you; which I never so earnestly longed for, as now, I could almost wish you were as impatient to see me; we should then meet before "the beginning of term." However, a few days will make no great difference; and I am content to wait, 'till business answers the same end as inclination.

Though I never wanted the aid of philosophy more than now, I find myself less qualified than ever to seek its help: "In pain, philosophy is spleen; in health, 'tis only ease."—Perhaps it is owing to my want of health, that I find my mind a perfect chaos. I have not attention sufficient to read for a quarter of an hour. I perceive myself frequently absent in company, without being able to recollect, what I was thinking of: Strange situation!—When wilt thou recal me to myself? If you have fixed the time of your coming to town, let me know by return of the post, that I may be certified, not *how long*, but *when* I shall live.

Adio, Caro!

FRANCES.

LETTER CXCIX.

HENRY to FRANCES.

I RECEIVED a letter from you, just as I was leaving Maidenhall yesterday, which has surprized me more than any thing I have ever met with.

The reason of applying those philosophic lectures, which you are offended at, was from this blunder: That I thought the loss of health, fortune, friends, or any other unhappiness of life, was the proper season to recommend such medicines; and it ought to be observed, I did not use such reflections

reflections to shew how *I* could bear your misfortunes, but to instruct and assist *you* to support yourself under them. He, who would comfort another, comes not, as I apprehended, with sighs and groans.

I shall never, upon any occasion, trouble you with more of my philosophy, but shall always cherish it in my heart; because, at this time, it stands your friend, and helps me to conclude myself, as usual,

My dear Fanny,

Ever your's.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R C C.

My dearest FANNY,

I RETURN you Lady O——'s letter, and am pleased to find, that you still hold on a correspondence with her. I love her for rallying your spirits. I am ashamed for my Fanny, with two such philosophic friends, to be so cast down. She seems to solicit your writing often to her, which surely I need not intreat you to obey; but shall only leave you more at liberty to do so, by letting you know, that, if time presses, I will take your having wrote to her, as a sufficient apology for your leaving me to hunt through the stores of antiquity for something to amuse me, in the room of those letters you neglect to me. How much do I regard your advantage, before my own pleasure? And for any favour, she can ever do me, I thus pay the price before-hand.

I thank you for your kind sentiments with regard to passing your time with me; and it is certain that those portions of life, which we spend agreeably

to ourselves, are all that can be computed in a philosopher's kalendar. I am pleased with the epitaph, which Similis, a general under Adrian, directed to be inscribed on his tomb-stone. He had spent a long life in perils and fatigues, 'till about seven years before his death; when he retired to his villa, passing his time as became a man of religion, sense, and philosophy. The Latin is, "Hic jacet Similis, cujus ætas multorum annorum fuit: Ipse septem duntaxat annos vixit." I will attempt the translation for you:

My life, O Time! to many years amount,
But seven only make my own account.

For my part, I have made three divisions of my time; and, according to the distinctions I make, there are but two portions of them to be attributed to my life. When I am in company, I *pass* my time; when I am alone, I *spend* it; and, while I am with you, I *enjoy* it.*

Since the election at Callen, I have had the happiness to be entirely alone; which the hurry, I was then in, has given me a thorough relish for. I do not think it amiss to consider the world as a prison; where we are subject to such company, as chance, necessity, vice, or misfortune, have associated us with: and solitude may be deemed the true siege of freedom; as there, alone, we can be masters of ourselves, our time, and occupations.

* At nostri bene computentur anni,
Et quantum tetricæ tulere febres;
Aut languor gravis, aut mali dolores
A vita meliore seperentur:
Infantes sumus, & senes videmur.
Ætatem Priamique, Nestorique
Longam qui putat esse, Martiane,
Multum decipiturque, falliturque,
Non est vivere, sed valere vita.

MART.
The

The only thing, in which I think Augustus attempted to be great, was his wish to live, to retire; but he was never great enough to execute that noble sentiment. It is somewhere said, that "privacy and freedom is the wish of the great, but the privilege of the mean." The life, I lead at present, is certainly the end proposed of all the labours and perils of the great, in all states of life; then what a true, philosophic pleasure must a man be sensible of, who has reached this goal, without being out of breath for it! while he looks back, with compassion, upon millions, who are sweating and toiling; casting away pomps, fascēs, and fortune, to make themselves light for the race, and shouldering through opposing crouds, to come up to him! What the philosopher Cyneas said to Pyrrhus might be here applied, but that I hate quotations; however, I shall give you one: Diogenes said, that "Aristotle must go to dinner, when Alexander's bell rung; but he was at liberty to wait for the summons of his appetite." In the world, we are obliged to act by rule; but, in retirement, we can act according to reason.

Adieu, thou dear object or idea of those portions of time, which I treasure up as the only parts of my life!

HENRY.

LETTER CCI.

I AM much obliged to my dear Harry for the indulgence he is so kind to grant me: I have a much better right to plead that privilege, at present, than I can ever have from writing to Lady O——, or any other person; which is my being *utterly* incapable of writing, from real illness. I *have been* all day on the bed; and, though I ventured

HENRY *and* FRANCES. 71

tured to Abby-Street, in hopes of rousing my spirits, I find myself so very weak and languid, that I am hardly able to hold the pen. I have had a severe fit of the rheumatism in my arm; which, joined to a constant cough, prevents my sleeping an hour at a time, the whole night.

I am ashamed of living a constant complainant. I think, it would be but decent in me to die; for, indeed, I am quite weary of life: but "Death" comes not at call, nor mends his slowest pace "for plaints or cries."

I am extremely glad you are so happy in your retirement. I would by no means have you quit it, for the tumultuous haunts of busy, idle men. Let me, at least, have the satisfaction of thinking you are well, and well pleased; which is the only thing on earth, that can give real pleasure to my dearest life's own sick

FANNY.

LETTER CCII.

FRANCES to HENRY.

I SEND you Mr. Lyttelton's monody, which I am charmed with, though I think there appears more poetry than love in it*: Not that the grief is not well, but that it is too well expressed; which a person who really felt, could not, perhaps, so aptly describe: and methinks I perceive more of the poet's art, than of the mourner's sorrow.

If, indeed, he be truly sincere, I declare that I would rather have Mr. Lyttelton my widower, than

* Spencer says of love, "'tis nothing nice," and as grief is the fondest part of love, it should be still less so.

FRANCES.
be

be the wife of any other man in the world, except yourself: for then I should have had the highest happiness this world can boast of, the being beloved and esteemed by a man of sense, taste, and virtue; the merit of which must insure the happiness of the next; which, if higher than that, rises above the power of human wish to desire, or of human wit to conceive.

There is one criterion of Mr. Lyttelton's sincerity, which I have established in my own mind; and that is his marrying, or not marrying again.

Adieu!

LETTER CCIII.

HENRY to FRANCES.

I RECEIVED the monody, and am as much charmed with it as you are; but I could not help smiling at your jealous criticism. I do not look upon the poem in the light that you do; for it affected me in a higher concern, that it was possible for your death to inspire me with every sentiment of grief there expressed, without the poetry to publish them to the world.

To a person used to read and write poetry, figures, allusions, and numbers are as familiar, as plain prose is to other people:

— — — “For the numbers came.”

Poets have generally pleaded their incapacity, on account of grief; but this was always in order to raise the merit of the poem. Tickel says,

“Grief unaffected suits but ill with art,

“And flowing numbers with a broken heart.”

However,

However, he has contrived to sigh out as beautiful an elegy, as ever was written in any language.

Waller said, that poets excel only in fiction; but this was rather an ingenious apology for writing better on Cromwell than on Charles: It had more of wit than criticism in it; or, if there was any thing of the latter, it must be true only of heroic poetry; because neither the actions, virtues, or real characters of men are high enough to adorn the epic verse.

But there is a mixture of tenderness and dignity, which form the characteristic of elegy, that agrees perfectly well with figures, which it naturally inspires; and the more sincere the grief, the bolder will these be of course.

There is one authority, which puts an end to any further criticism upon this subject. Horace says, "if you would make me weep, you must first drop tears yourself:" Which shews, that the beauty of elegy must rise in proportion to the sincerity of the mourner.

I remember the elder Palma, whose taste in music I was fond of, sat down, one day, to compose something for me; perhaps I was in love at that time, for I desired he would make it expressive of the most melting tenderness: Upon which he replied, "Il faut pleurer donc;" and, as the Italians have their passions at will, he began to sigh, and actually wrought himself up to a flow of tears, while he was writing.

But I might have saved you the trouble of all this criticism, only by referring you to Mr. Lyttelton's character; who is far from being so slight a man, as to *play* the poet upon so serious and affecting a subject: And there is one particular, which proves to me his sincerity beyond all doubt; which

is, that, among a great choice and variety of his truly classical and poetic writings, this poem is, I think, the chef d'oeuvre.

All the fault I find with Mr. Lyttelton, is, that he did not under-write himself upon this occasion; for there is a certain gallant pride in an ingenuous nature, which tempts it to fall short even of the praise it thinks is due, and is willing to bestow, lest it should be mistaken for adulation. However, there is, at the same time, a certain fondness in the lover, which inclines him to give immortality to the object of his passion, which is not to be hoped for, without an exertion of the fullest powers of poetry.

I pity a poet's grief more than any other man's; for his natural warmth, tenderness of sentiment, and liveliness of imagination, give sorrow a power of sinking deeper in his heart, than others can possibly be affected with. When a plain man loses a mistress, wife, child, or friend, he laments merely for the loss of so much property: But, when these dear connections are torn off from a person of a delicate taste, he feels as if he had lost part of himself, *animæ dimidium*—nay worse, for the remainder is a burden to him.

Your criterion I will not admit of; for a man, who is sincere in his grief for the loss of a wife, is the more likely to marry again. When pleasures are flown, nature strongly solicits the recovery of them: The chaste nuptial joys engross the whole man, and form his taste and sentiments entirely to such social enjoyments which, by fond indulgence, become at last his sole scheme of happiness; and when those charming ties are dissolved, he has the world, as it were, to begin anew; and it is surely then more natural, and more rational too, to endeavour to renew the pleasures we have been so
well

well acquainted with, and approved of, than to attempt a spiritless *succedaneum* to them.

So that, if ever your *crisis* should come to pass, we ought not to doubt his sincerity to the last wife, but rather say, that he had paid a very high compliment to his future one.

Adieu !

HENRY.

L E T T E R CCIV.

Dear FANNY,

AS the post for this day is not come in, I do not know yet, whether you leave town to-morrow or no ; therefore I shall write to you, because I wou'd not spare myself any trouble certain, for even the chance of giving you a quarter of an hour's amusement.

I met with a small treatise yesterday, intituled, " On the Employment of Time." It is wrote by Gilbert West. I think it is very well *collected* ; for, indeed, it is mostly a heap of quotations, and shews more of learning than understanding : For a work of this kind almost any man may *compile*, who reads with a common-place book by him.

Young, the satirist, has two very severe lines against quotations, which, for that reason, I shall not recite ; and there is certainly nothing so tiresome to the reader as writings of that kind, which are only to ~~be~~ admitted in works of fancy, but not at all necessary upon moral or philosophical subjects. For example ; if Mr. West speaks sense or reason, what occasion is there to inform us, that Cicero thought the same way, or said the same thing ? It is argument, not authority, which con-

vinces. All knowledge is derived originally from the human understanding ; and a thought is nevertheless our own, because it has been hit on by somebody else before : And one may as well quote Adam for breathing, because he was the first creature who did so, as Euclid for saying that the three angles of every triangle are equal to two right ones, because he was the first person who demonstrated that proposition *.

A quoting author is just as ridiculous as a country girl, who, upon her first coming to town, being decked out by the help of her friends, should make public acknowledgment from whom she had her stockings, her shift, her stays, &c. So that, if every person was there to claim their own, she would be left as naked as the jay in the fable, or as such a pye bald author, say *writer* rather, say compiler, say publisher, say second-hand cook, who gives you a beggar's dish out of fragments, or say Printer's sign-post, upon which are pasted the heterogeneous scraps of many authors.

I remember a stupid sort of fellow, who used to put me in mind of these men, who are too modest to say any thing of their own ; for he never asked for bread, drink, told you what o'clock it was, or mentioned even the most trifling occurrence, without adding, " as the man said : " And whenever he had a mind, like these men, to shew the extent of his learning, by recurring up to the most an-

* Epictetus in his XIX chapter, ridicules this impertinence finely ; for, after he has made a philosophic division of things, into good, evil, and indifferent, somebody absurdly asks him, whence he learned such distinction ? " from Hellanicus, says he, in his history of " Egypt ; for what signifies it (if it be just) whether I " received my information from Hellanicus, Diogenes, " or any other philosopher ? "

tient

tient authority, he would cry, "as the man said
" * *a great while ago.*"

The importance of the subject, which Mr. West treats on, is great, and ought to be the frequent reflection of every man of sense, morality, or religion. He has considered it with regard to the two last, and placed the matter in several very strong lights : But, as a thing of this consequence cannot stand in too many points of view, I shall attempt to consider it with relation to the first, merely as a rational man, without any regard to virtue ; relative only to our present state, and, in that respect, confined intirely to ourselves : Which few hints you may stile, "Of the Oeconomy of Time"—Of the simple enlargement of it—Or, a certain method to lengthen life, in spite of fate, or of the grave.

There is an expression often made use of by thoughtless people, which astonishes and provokes me extremely ; " Let us do so and so, to kill time." It is some revenge, however, to observe, what suicides they are, at the same time of this most horrid and unnatural murder : So true it is, that we and our time must live and die together. We generally lament the shortness of man's life taken together, while we are blaming the tediousness of every portion of it †. This contradiction may be accounted for, if we consider, that as time, unemployed, lags heavily along, an idle person, for this reason, must complain of tiresome days ;

* Al i alios se convincere arbitrantur, cum multos, & celebres testes prodixerint : Verum hæc probationis ratio nullius est momenti ad veritatem. Ctc.

I am here quoting quotations against quotations, like Jeremy declaiming against wit ; but if 'tis allowable in any case, it is in this.

† When men say " Life is short," it is not time, but their extravagance, that is to blame : a squanderer may make the largest patrimony scanty.

HENRY

and

and as duration is marked only by the succession of ideas, his life must appear shortest, who has fewest actions or passages to recollect.

To consider man, then, only with regard to this life; what a miserable wretch must he be, whose passing minutes are told as so many hours, and whose past years are reflected upon but as so many days?

Let us then, as rational creatures, contrive so to employ ourselves in a series of actions, which by marking every period of our lives, we may enjoy this great and happy advantage, that the present moments shall glide imperceptibly away, and our past age appear so long, upon summing up, that we may not murmur at the short span “of threescore years and ten.”

O Vita stulto longa, sapienti brevis!

Again, 'tis computed, that the generality of men sleep away about one third of their time, that is, about eight hours in the twenty-four. Now five hours is full sufficient for any person, who would preserve health of body, and vigour of mind*: so that there may be above three hours saved out of every day, which is about one day in the week, and that is one year in seven. Then, by the time a man has reached his grand climacteric, he may be said to have lived just nine years more than some of his twin cotemporaries.

What would a man give for nine years added to sixty-three! How much more valuable are nine years before sixty-three! for surely that time is the most preferable, which we can live without growing older. We cannot, indeed, borrow time from death; but we can take it from it's semblance,

* Rising early is but a minute's uneasiness, for several hours pleasure.

Sleep—

sleep—Which brings me to the close of my proposition, or “a certain method to lengthen life, in “spight of fate, or the grave.”

HENRY.

LETTER CCV.

Dear HARRY,

I HAVE read the treatise you mention, but like your supplement to it much better. It is a double charity to write to me on subjects at present, because there is not a book in this house which could supply me with matter for a minute's reflection; which makes the time, except what I spend in reading your letters, or writing to you, pass like an idle dream, which leaves no trace behind.

Your letter has made me grow quite impatient at the reflection of having lost so much of my life. The desire of improving my mind, and fixing its contemplation upon proper objects, increases daily; yet, by some unforeseen accident, I find myself continually deprived even of one day's retirement, and am, if I may use the expression, constantly employed in idleness.

The tediousness of present time is often irksome to the wise man, as well as the fool, though not in so great a degree; which has been considered as a proof of the soul's immortality: For we are continually pushing forward to some point of time, which, when arrived at, falls short of the expectations we had raised upon it; we still persist in flattering ourselves, and fix our happiness on some future period, which, in its course, brings disappointment too; and yet we still go on, wishing the present hour was past, and hoping peace or joy from some more distant æra; 'till the grave open-
ing,

ing, interrupts our schemes, and shews the only prospect where the soul can rest. Oh! may we fix our grasp on that strong-hold, which cannot, will not fail us; and, like the Patriarch, wrestle for a blessing! Let the incumbering world recede, and even our mutual loves decay, before the glorious hope of immortality! What joy, what more than transport, do I feel, in thinking that, when death shall have dissolved the poor, infirm, and feeble forms, which now incase our spirits, we shall meet again, conscious of each other's love and truth, in perfect bliss above!

I do not, however, cordially approve of your lessening the portions of time allotted for sleep. It is wise Nature prompts, and all philosophy is vain which dares oppose her. She has appointed equal periods to labour and to rest; while man, impatient to be happy, steals from his only promised blessing, ease, to squander on the vain pursuit of wealth or pleasure. I must own, notwithstanding your philosophical moral, which I acknowledge to be very ingenious, that I am a great friend to sleep, whom Statius calls the most * amiable of all the Gods. When tired out with grief or pain, it strengthens and renews the springs of life; we wake refreshed, and feel a kind of silent hymn of gratitude arise in our minds for this, more than for any other blessing. While we sleep, we are, at least, negatively good, incapable of acting or designing ill; and I am afraid, that even the best man has more to answer for his waking than his sleeping hours, be he never so great a sluggard. However, I shall receive one advantage from your doctrine, that I shall insist upon your practice keeping up to your preaching; and I will certainly produce your letter against you, whenever I find

* *Juvenis placidissime Divum.*

STAT.

you

you begin to yawn about ten o'clock; for that is a most unreasonable *hour* for a person to go to bed, who has not occasion to sleep more than *five*.

L E T T E R CCVI.

My dearest FANNY,

I DO not lessen the portion of time allotted by nature for rest. I find five hours sufficient for my health and spirits; more sleep injures both; then rationally I conclude, nature meant no more. Now every indulgence we take, beyond what nature requires, is rather a fatigue, than a refreshment. This is equally true in meat, and drink, and sleep: And, to consider it in this light, that passage in Lord Grimston's play, which, along with the whole performance, has been so laughed at, is not quite so absurd, as it is generally taken; "I'll rest my wearied bones, till they more wearied be." I do not think, with you, that a man is passively good, all the while he is asleep; it would be great favour to allow him to be even negatively bad. The mind of man was framed for a series of rational thought, and his life designed for a course of moral actions; if then, without necessity, he ceases to think, or act, to the best of his powers, he mars the end of his creation. Nay, I think, we can hardly refrain from charging positive guilt upon a person, who sleeps more than he needs. Sleep is a temporary death; and, as I hinted to you upon this subject before, how a man may lengthen his life, he by this means shortens it, of course; then, for so much, he is guilty of suicide. Is not a man guilty of theft, who steals from an heap, because he does not pocket the whole? And, if a parcel of money

be laid in a line upon a table, is he not equally criminal, who takes from the middle, as if he stole from one end?

Adieu!

HENRY.

* LETTER CCVII.

Dear FANNY,

AS I never read with complete pleasure, but when we are together; so it gives me uneasiness, in my museum, when any sentiment or criticism occurs to me, that I cannot immediately communicate it to you: And this is the reason, that many of my letters treat upon subjects, which seem not proper for such familiar epistles, as our's generally are; so that, perhaps, some of them appear stiff, merely from the freedom of them; for I never sit down with a design of writing you *a letter*, but, when I take pen in hand, I write you whatever occurs to my mind at that time, whether poetry, metaphysics, politics, or divinity.

For instance now, who could think of entertaining a young woman of wit, gaiety, and poetic rapture, with a discourse upon self-murder? But I happened this morning to look into a treatise against suicide, by Dr. Watts, which I think a very insufficient performance.

Authorities drawn from the Scriptures, or writings of the philosophers, may have effect upon very weak or over religious minds: But reasons, not authorities, are requisite to men of sense, or free reflection; which a man may have, without being an Atheist, or merely a Deist.

* See Henry to the Editor, last paragraph.

In those places, where the author-attempts to reason, he does it very imperfectly; of which I shall give you two instances, among many. He says, "We are placed here, like a centinel at his post," &c. and after going on, with a great deal of common-place, on that head, concludes, from the *supposed* analogy of human and divine things, that suicide must be a crime. But this is begging the question. What authority from reason have we to say, that man is placed here as a centinel? Or, what certainty have we of this analogy? In metaphysics, indeed, we are obliged to give some definitions of our ideas, in order to help us to discourse intelligibly about them; but, in reality, there may be no more relation between the things themselves, and our ideas of them, than there is between colours and sounds; though a blind man, to give us his notion of red, compared it to the sound of a trumpet, but yet, in true philosophy, it comes as near the sound of a lute: And, indeed, the speculative divines seem to me, generally, to reason, like this man, with more fancy than philosophy.

Another piece of reasoning, he makes use of, is this: "That, though we cannot perceive any relation, we are placed in, with regard to this life, (as in some instances may be the case) which might make our death a moral evil; yet, *perhaps*, we may be appointed by God to influence some future event, and so the ends of Providence may be disappointed by one man's impatience." Now I think it extremely weak, perhaps impious, to imagine, that it can be in the power of one man, or mankind united, to frustrate the least scheme or design of Providence: and a thief, at the gallows, may make use of such an argument with as much reason as any body else:

So that this reasoning, by proving too much, proves nothing.

Watts has, indeed, summed up all that has ever been said upon this occasion; but, to tell the truth, I never met with any thing satisfactory upon the subject; which is owing to the cautious, but unfair manner of arguing, upon this head, used by the divines; who, for fear of giving the least encouragement to desperate men, will not admit of any sort of latitude in this matter.

Adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CCVIII.

FRANCES to HENRY.

ON finding that my dear Harry's letter had been opened before it came to my hands, I began to apprehend that my letters might have been intercepted. I know not how this treatment affects you; but it has filled me with the highest resentment: For sure, it is the extreme of insolence and cruelty to deprive us of the only means left to soften the tedious, melancholy hours of absence: nor can I believe that any law, human or divine, has vested even a parent with such a power. What barbarous tyranny then to assume it!

I have often experienced the uneasiness you mention, at reading any thing that pleased me when you was not with me. One finds but a vague enjoyment in any pleasure, unshared by the person beloved.

I think I have reason to resent the apology you make for writing upon subjects above a slight girl's reflections. If you consider me in that light, I must

must join with the world in condemning your taste: But if, as you have flattered me, my person has the least share in your affection, that you love my mind, and would improve it, in order to render it capable of the highest enjoyment, that of conversing with you, why need you make any apology for taking the proper method of rendering it worthy of your regard? I have often told you, that no subject can appear dull or abstruse to me, which you write on: Nay, I have gone farther, and sometimes fancied, that if you were to write in a language I was wholly unacquainted with, I should certainly understand you; at least I am sure I should, if I was to hear and see you speak it.

I have never met with any of Dr. Watts's writings; but, from the specimen you give, I take him to be a better christian than philosopher. Though I am sure there may be many stronger arguments against suicide, than those you quote from him, yet I am pleased at his considering every individual, though without visible tie or connection, as necessary to the well-being of the whole species; for, as the great artificer made nothing in vain, the wretch who finds not happiness in his own bosom, or in any outward objects, may, from this principle alone, conclude self-murder to be a crime.

But, after all, what are all arguments about this matter? Only speculative essays: for I am convinced, that no person ever committed the act, but an Atheist or a madman. Then it would be in vain to reason with the first, upon principles which he denies you; and it would be a jest to reason with the other at all.

After this reflection, I do not look upon suicide in that shocking light which other people do: For, with regard to the Atheist, I fear it is pretty equal, to his poor soul, after what manner he dies; and,

as to the madman, I throw him upon his mercy, who could, had he pleased, have "made reason " rule, and passion be its slave."

* L E T T E R CCIX.

HENRY to FRANCES.

* * * * *

"I talked of dying; better thoughts come forward;" and since the satisfaction I have had in this day has made me somewhat more in love with life, I shall here give you a supplement to my last letter, lest you should imagine I was quite of a different opinion from Watts, because I did not allow his reasoning to be sufficiently strong upon the subject.

I do not look upon suicide, or indeed upon any act, in the light that divines do, as criminal in itself; but regard all actions, in a general view, as indifferent in themselves; for the same thing may be virtuous at one time, and vicious at another: so that the difference seems to lie merely in circumstance. I think, with deference to the pulpit, that whoever understands the nature of vice in any other sense, impiously charges God with having originally generated evil. Now, with regard to this particular instance we are upon, I consider a suicide not as guilty of a particular crime, but of so much vice, as the moral consequences of the act leave him chargeable with: And the chain is so extensive, and the dependencies so nice in this life, that very few men can be free enough, from relation or contingency, to be perfectly clear from

* See Henry to the Editor, last paragraph.

guilt in this act: And, so far as it is a crime, 'it is of the highest nature so, as it has the aggravation of presumption, the sin of acting against nature, and the impossibility of repentance.

However there may be particular instances where the thing may be indifferent in itself; yet, even here, though the action be innocent, the turn of mind, which prompts to it, must be extremely vicious. It argues an impatience and rashness, which are the signs of an intemperance of soul, a disregard to the opinion of this world, which every good man should have respect for, or a despair of God's providence, which a man of philosophy or religion should never betray.

There are, I think, but three things which can provoke a person to this desperate act; pain, poverty, or shame. If from the first circumstance, then he has forgot what all the trials in this life were intended for; and so foolishly refuses that physic, which may give him health to immortality. If from the second, it is owing to a false pride, and an unchristian spirit, joined to a habit of idleness, which creates a slothful despondency. If from the third, he but seals his name with infamy, makes that shame the more public, and deprives himself of any opportunity of retrieving his character. It was finely said, by some great man, upon hearing libels had been wrote against him, "I will live so, as to give the lie to their reproach."

Suppose a criminal leading forth to execution, even he shall have no power over his own life, though already forfeited and condemned; for he adds to his crime, by rebelling against the laws of his country, and deprives the community of a wholesome example of public justice. Beside, as all human inflictions may be considered as trials of our virtue, so may even legal punishments, if undetected

dergone with resignation, contrition, and hope, be considered as atonements for our crimes.

Thus you see, that even in the most indifferent case, though the action itself may be morally innocent, yet it can never be performed but by a vicious actor.

In short, it is an action contrary to the laws of God and man. The first, without recurring to authorities, may be proved from the natural abhorrence we find in ourselves from the act, which, to demonstration, shews the sense of Providence about the matter: and the second, we know from the general sense of mankind, who have endeavoured to deter from, by affixing ignominy upon it, the only way of dealing with the dead.

But all these reflections may not occur to a man in the hurry of the act; for there are but few deliberate suicides: yet surely any moment of time may afford us leisure for this short expostulation; “What if it should be a crime? Then, great God, how shocking must his situation be, whose conviction comes too late for repentance!”

HENRY.

P. S. Keep this letter for me.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCX.

FRANCES to HENRY.

AS I am thoroughly convinced, that my dear Harry is a much better judge of his own affairs, than I can pretend to be, I will never let my over-anxiousness for his welfare betray me into so
great

great an error, as offering my advice ; but rest satisfied with believing, that he will use every honest and prudent means for our mutual happiness.

I was so extremely ill on Saturday, that I was not able to hold a pen. The continual distraction and uneasiness of my mind has almost destroyed my little body. I am doubly unhappy, that your circumstances prevent your coming to town : your presence would soften all my sorrows, and subdue even pain and sickness. How have I flattered myself, that you longed as ardently to see me, as I do to see you ! and yet you will not answer to my oft-repeated question, When will you come ? I am impatient at your absence, and yet afraid to wish you here. The situation of your affairs distracts me : I do not regard myself, but cannot bear to think that you are unhappy. Do not be angry with me, Harry, for saying, that I most earnestly wish and pray the Almighty to take me to his mercy. I know my death would be of use to you : your father, and all your friends, would then be free from any apprehension of your injuring yourself for an unhappy woman, who would die to serve you *. That single consideration could disarm the spectre of his terrors, and take away his sting ; for I could part with thee, my life, my love, my soul, to save thee from misfortune and distress !

My spirits are so entirely sunk, that I am utterly unable to write : You may scold, if you please ; but, indeed, I cannot get the better of myself.

Adieu, then, my soul's hope, my life's pain and pleasure !

FRANCES.

* Their marriage was still a secret.

LETTER CCXI.

My dear FANNY,

THE dependence, you express, upon my doing every thing for our mutual happiness, was not necessary to encourage me to do so, upon all occasions; but, if I needed any inducement, that confidence alone would be sufficient to oblige me to it; and I shall never attempt to over-rule your will, but to better inform it; or the more effectually to answer the great end of all my thoughts and actions, namely, your happiness and establishment, and my own, only through such charming means. My not going to Dublin before this, is one instance, I may give, that I prefer both our interests, before our pleasure; and, if I have not fixed the day, at your frequent request, it is because I cannot be certain of it yet; however, I can answer you, that, before ten days from this, I shall have the unfeigned delight of seeing my sweet girl.

I cannot help being angry with you for such an ungenerous and impious wish, as you make in your last letter. What advantage could possibly accrue to me, from your death, who, as I said before, only intend, nay, only wish or desire, and am only capable of happiness through your means? How have I *undeserved* from you, or what merits have those persons you so falsely stile my friends, toward you, that their satisfaction is so unkindly and unwarrantably preferred before mine? What comfort could they afford me, for your loss? or where else could I expect to find it? It is too late in life for me to begin the world anew: My habits are grown too strong to be counteracted now: What a turn must my whole set of ideas take! and how many refined pleasures must I *unkarn*, or lose the relish of, before I could be satisfied with the enjoy-

enjoyment of any other woman ! I have often quarrelled with you, upon such subjects, and take it very unkindly that you will not recollect yourself a little, before you treat me with so much ingratitude and ungenerosity. Indeed *I* is angry with *U*, in spite of all the letters of the alphabet, from Alpha to Omega ; which is the order your dear idea presents itself to my thoughts in. Repent, thou suicide and homicide in one !

Remember to write to me by Tuesday's post, directed to Cashell, and on Thursday direct to me at Callen, which is my way home. I will not excuse you these two posts, because I shall want your company on the road.

Adieu, my treasure ! for, by a turn upon the words of scripture, I may call you so, as my heart is with you.

HENRY.

LETTER CCXII.

THE sincere pleasure I received from my dear Harry's last letter is, indeed, sufficient to make me wish for life, nay, a long one, to enable me to repay his generous tenderness. Believe me, my sweet love, your kindness is not thrown away ; for all the poor return, which I can make, is most sincerely your's, in thought, in word, in deed :— And, if I really am so blest, as to contribute to your happiness, well may you call me ungenerous and ungrateful, for wishing to exchange that bliss, even for the joys of immortality. The transport, which I feel, from thinking I am dear to you, is much too great to be expressed. I am, I ever will be your's : dispose my life, my being, as you please : Thou art the lord of me.—Haste then, thou dear author of my happiness, haste to complete

plete it by thy much-loved, much-longed for presence !

I am still une pauvre solitaire ; and look upon myself to be the truest female recluse, that ever was ; as my confinement, solitude, and fasting, are dictated by choice, not necessity :—yet I am afraid this voluntary restraint is not founded in reason, or virtue. My moderation may be compared to that of an epicure, who, though he may have a good appetite, eats sparingly of a coarse dinner ; but provide him with delicacies, and he shews the glutton. So I go seldom abroad ; see no company at home, never think of public diversions, and pass my life in a state of indifference to the objects which are within my reach ; but, were it in my power to enjoy the feast of reason, in thy converse, I should quickly lose the appearance of self-denial, and gladly indulge myself in the extreme enjoyment of the highest pleasures—those of seeing, hearing, loving, and being loved by thee.

Adieu !

FRANCES.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCXIII.

My sweetest, dear girl,

I AM at a loss for epithets fond or expressive enough to address you with ; but must refer my self to the intuition of angelic minds, to shew you how far short the warmest terms of human language fall of that sincere affection and tender love I bear you.

I am surpris'd at the weakness of your concern upon my mentioning my dying ; for surely a man *is not the nearer*, though he may be the better
pre-

prepared for it, by his making a will; nay, even the very approach of it ought to alarm us no more, than it should a fond parent, that his child was growing taller; for death, in the philosophy of a man, or the hope of a christian, is to be considered, not as a change of our state, but an improvement of it*. However, I will indulge your tenderness so far, as to speak no more upon this head; but am pleased to find I am even with you, for some unkind hints, much stronger than mine, upon this subject, in one of your late letters.

I have been to see the large manufacture at † Waterford, as I have engaged in the same; and it has given me great satisfaction; though it would make any one, of less spirit than myself, despair of bringing so vast a work to perfection, from the complexed machinery, various business, intense application, and large sums of money, and credit, which are necessary to carry it on; yet, believe me, that every difficulty, which occurred, has but strengthened my resolution to pursue it. It would surprize and startle your philosophy, at the same time, to see so many different machines performing the parts of rational agents, and requiring no farther assistance from man, than to set them in motion, and to preserve their courses regular, which is no more than what often man from man requires, as patients from physicians: Nay, some of them, like a person in health, perform their parts by the mere help of the elements only; and, if the sole difference between these and animals be, that the first regularly labours to pursue the design of it's formation, while the other, through caprice, is capable of disappointing the ends of it's creation,

* Plotinus said, that the gods made the life of man mortal, out of mercy.

† Smyth's linen manufactures.

I do not think that living creatures have much to boast of, in the superiority of their mechanism. Man, indeed, as exercised in the contemplation of truth, beauty, harmony, and order, and employed in the practice of virtue, morality, and religion, is, in reality, a noble and exalted creature; but the many-headed monster, the vulgar herd, who are insensible to these great advantages, I take to be more imperfect instruments, than a windmill or a loom.

Adieu ! Adieu !

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCXIV.

Dear FANNY,

YOU desired to hear from me on Wednesday ; but you may see my impatience, in writing to you a post sooner.

I had a very direct and obstinate wind in my face, all the day, and very disagreeable weather of rain and hail ; however I jogged on hither, to shew that neither wind or weather should get the better of me. I suffered greatly from the cholic ; but chewed rhubarb all the way. Mutton chops was the word ; and now your health goes round ; which is a just manner of speaking, as I pledge myself to that toast, every glass.

I direct this to * India, because I know you are to dine there to-morrow, and might be from home, before the post reached your lodgings. My love to the company ; and remember that the council of six is still complete, as I have left my deputy with you : so observe, that, upon every question,

* The India Warehouse.

you

you are to claim the right of a double voice, which is the same as if I were present; for I am sure I shall never differ from you, in any opinion. "Her taste was his own."

Adieu !

LETTER CCXV.

FRANCES to HENRY.

HOW vastly am I indebted to that tenderness, which even prevents my desires, and gratifies my fondest wish, before it is scarce formed ! Indeed, thou dearest, best of men, my heart is fruitful with a thousand thoughts of gratitude and love to thee. Every moment recalls some image of thy kindness to me, and fills my eyes with tears, more pleasing than "the broadest mirth unfeeling folly wears."

I felt every blast of the rude wind, that durst oppose thee; and almost envied it the happiness, it was insensible to, of kissing thy lips. Let me, my dearest love, intreat you, by that regard you have for my health and happiness, to take care of that, on which they both depend; and no longer trifle with the pain, which your present disorder gives me. Remember, I have your promise to take emetics, if you do not find benefit from the rhubarb. Indeed, if you knew what I suffer from your illness, you would do every thing in your power to relieve me.

I shall take care of your dear little epitome, and hope, " * the full interpretation of time" will render it worthy of the commission you have assigned it; and give me leave to say, that my sincerest

* Shakespeare's Coriolanus.

wish is now, and ever shall be, to deserve the compliment you make me.

The painter took away your picture, but it is no matter; since neither time nor absence can efface the much more lively and more lovely one, that is painted on my heart.

I cannot help repeating my desire of hearing from you, tho' I know it is needless; as I am sure my dear Harry will do every thing to alleviate the otherwise insupportable pains of absence.

Adieu!

FRANCES.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCXVI.

Dear FANNY,

Castle Dermot.

I HAVE set up here at the old inn; though you all say it is a bad one: this may be a reason for new guests not to come, but not for old ones to quit it. I always suppose, in such cases, that poverty is the reason of bad accommodations; and make it a sort of charity, to support the indigent; and, when I eat, or lie badly, it helps digestion, and softens my repose, to consider that others eat or sleep the better for it. I made a vile breakfast at ———, this morning, from this turn of mind; though I had forsworn the old house, upon my going up to town last. Such reflections as these, my dear Fanny, are extremely pleasant; and their being uncommon is, perhaps, one of the reasons I amuse myself with them.

I halted here, in order to write to ———, instead of paying him a visit; for I do business better by proxy, than in person. The reason that I write *better* than I speak, is not, as Dryden observes
upon

upon Persius, that I have a difficulty in finding a meaning; but rather, as the same critic remarks upon Juvenal, “*car il est bon de se fair valoir*,” that it is hard to chuse one. I have too much fancy, and am too nice about my expression, to explain myself off hand distinctly and intelligibly. Besides, the persons and objects, which strike on my eyes, throw me into a confusion, which hinders my judgment from having fair play to exert itself. My ideas resemble a painter’s pallet, where you have great variety of colours lying together, without harmony or order; ’till a skilful pencil has blended them into proper lights and shades, to compose an agreeable picture. This difference between my writing and speaking must be very obvious to you, with whom I have corresponded, almost constantly for above five years past: and, upon a review of my letters lately, I do not recollect to have repeated the same sentiment twice; yet I remember to have said the same words, in conversation, to you, an hundred times.

Every mile I rode, since I left town, my impatience to see Maidenhall has increased.—Perhaps, the affection, I have for it, being suspended, while I was with you, (the greater passion absorbing the less) was then set at liberty to operate, when we parted; or, perhaps, the thoughts of quitting, as is natural in soft minds, have the more attended me toward it. If I thought there was a Naiad or Dryad in the place, who would lament my absence, I should sacrifice my interest to my superstition; but my religion teaching me, that, wherever we go, our guardian angel accompanies us, I think I but obey its call, whenever I change my situation to my advantage.

I would have you, by all means, write to Lady O——. You may also present my *duty* to her, as she is to you a *mother*.

Adieu, my life! my double life now!

LETTER CCXVII.

I BELIEVE, I need not take much pains to assure my dear Harry, that nothing, but a very severe illness, could have prevented my writing last post. However, I hope his own thoughts furnished him with some other cause for my silence; and that he had not the least apprehension of the terrible situation, his poor Fanny was in. I was seized with a contraction in my stomach on Wednesday morning, attended with an unusual pain; but, as I had intervals of ease, I hoped it would go off. I dressed myself, in order to go to ——; but, finding myself grow worse every hour, I was, at last, obliged to send an apology. The pain threw me into perfect convulsions; and, in spite of all the medicines which were given me, I continued on the rack 'till Friday morning, when a violent emetic gave me ease. I am now free from pain, but so extremely weak, that I cannot walk from my bed to the dining-room, without help. Even in those moments, which I thought my last, I rejoiced you were not with me; as your sufferings would have added to mine, and made them more than I could bear. Besides, I should not have had any thing to struggle for, had you been present; but the earnest desire, I have again to see thee, gave me strength to encounter those agonies, that would have torn me from thee, my more than life! I would not let Tom write to acquaint you with
my

my illness, lest your apprehension should suggest something even worse than the reality.

I now congratulate you on my recovery, and shall proceed to thank my sweet Harry for both his letters.

There is, doubtless, something inexpressibly charming in reflecting on those exercises of humanity, which my dear practical philosopher is so constantly employed in: but, with regard to the two recent instances you mention, I cannot help thinking, that it is rather doing a general injury, than a particular charity, to support persons in any profession, which their want of capacity, industry or a proper fund, renders them unfit for: these persons, so disqualified, prevent others, who may be capable from engaging in that business, which they do not execute; while themselves might become useful members of society in another situation. You may, perhaps, think this way of arguing too severe: but, were we not to regard the general good more than that of individuals, the tenderness of our dispositions might impel us to acts of the highest injustice, and lead us, perhaps, to the rescue of a murderer; if we did not reflect on the salutary effects, which examples produce, in the general community. But, while I talk with such seeming strictness, my heart and pen disagree; and an inward consciousness of the many failings, I am incident to, strongly reminds me of the mutual claim, which every part of the creation has to each other's indulgence; and, perhaps, none has more need of it, than my poor, faulty, helpless self.

I can very easily account for your being able to write in a more clear and distinct manner, than you speak: for, besides the confusion of ideas, which you have found so just and pretty a resemblance for, you have, probably, more modesty than any man, who has lived so long, and been so

conversant with the world, as you have ; and I am sure there are men, who are not possessed of the thousandth part of your understanding or knowledge, who could make a better figure in a general conversation.

“ Distrustful sense with modest caution speaks,
“ While flutt’ring nonsense in full volleys breaks.

You express much reluctance at parting with the child of your fancy ; and I will allow your attachment too to be a reasonable one : but, like good reason, let it give way to better ; and remember, “ Your home is every-where.” I am, perhaps, partial to this new scheme, as I first mentioned it ; for this, if for no other reason, you cannot condemn me for desiring its success, as my utmost wish has ever been to become, in some shape or other, the means of good to thee. Let me then, my sweet love, flatter myself, that, in this affair, I was the agent to thy guardian-angel, and pointed out the road to thy future advantage. But I will not enforce the subject farther, as I am sure you will do every thing, which sense and prudence direct.

Health, peace, and competence attend my love !

FRANCES.

LETTER CCXVIII.

My dearest FANNY,

YOU have made but a more cruel apology for your silence last post, than that silence itself. You cannot imagine what anxiety I went through, in reading your letter. You, indeed, I apprehended, was well and safe, from your writing ; but I expected a *lapsus lingvæ* at every line. The remedy I knew to be pleasant, but the delay of
the

the cure intolerably tedious. I am not so fond of this life, as to desire to renew my age; but I should wish most ardently to revive it in my posterity.

I must insist upon it, that, 'till I see you again, which shall be the sooner for your compliance with this request, you are in bed, every night, by eleven o'clock,—as much sooner, as you please; and up at eight,—as much earlier, as you will; and that, in every other particular, you will live, as we should do together, alone at Maidenhall, or whatever place we may hereafter spend and enjoy our lives together in.

There is something very just in your remarks upon my partial humanity: but I remember to have observed somewhat to you lately, upon this subject,

“ Beyond the fix'd and settled rules

“ Of vice and virtue in the schools,” &c.

This dispute between us puts me in mind of a parallel difference between Swift and Pope, in their letters to each other; but, though we sometimes argue on different sides of the question, I am satisfied we shall always agree in acting the same way.

I have not mentioned a word to my own family of my correspondence with —; nor shall I, 'till it is finished. I must now shorten my letter to you, that I may have time to lengthen one to him; the copy of which I design to send you, and desire you will return it to me.

Your's, your's, your's.

LETTER CCXIX.

AND so, Sir, your chief concern was for Bab ! indeed, Bab's mam is affronted ; though I may venture to assure you, she was more anxious for it, than herself. I have as little fondness for life, as most people ; nor is there " a single hour " o'erpassed, that I could wish should take its " turn again : " yet I acknowledge the same desire, which you express ; and, I am persuaded, feel it infinitely stronger, than you can do, at present. There is the same kind of difference in our attachment to the dear little one, as in our affection for each other. You were the first and only object of my love : for you I felt all the romantic tenderness of a first passion ; while you, who had loved much and many, were utterly insensible to all the soft inquietudes, the endearing anguish, the heart-rending fears, which Providence, in mercy to mankind, decreed should never be re-felt.

I am to be sent to bed at eleven o'clock, and made to get up at eight, for Bab's sake, and these are the conditions, you annex to your coming. Indeed, my sweet love, I will comply with them, or any other command of your's, not grudgingly, nor of necessity, but with the utmost cheerfulness ; as it shall always be my highest pride to love, honour and obey thee, my guide, guardian, kinsman, father, friend.

I should, indeed, be vastly ashamed of myself, did I argue against your sentiments, from my own : but as you first enter on those subjects, you leave me only the wrong side of the argument ; which I sometimes take up, for the pleasure of being fully confirmed in the right, by you. With regard to the late matter in question, you may be thoroughly *assured*, that both our ways of thinking and acting

will ever be the same; for I hope, and believe, I have as much humanity in my disposition, as any person I ever knew, except yourself. Did I not love you extremely, I should envy your superiority there, and there alone.

Rejoice with me! I have had two whole days sacred to peace and contemplation—But they are over, and noise and folly re-assume their throne.

I know not what I am now writing, for the hurricane is begun. Oh, for a little nutshell of my own!

I rejoice in this fine weather, because you enjoy it; though I cannot help lamenting my own confinement, doubly uneasy from the disagreeableness of my companion. But I will bear it patiently, in hopes of happier days; days spent with thee. When, oh! when will that time come?

Adieu, my dearest life! I am, and ever shall be, your's,

FRANCES.

LETTER CCXX.

AND so, Madam, you are jealous of Bab, are you? I have known such instances with regard to dead rivals, but none before of objects, not yet in being. However, I shall allow you some foundation for your jealousy here; for, if any thing ever rivals you, it must be some new perfection of your's; for nothing can excel you, but what is derived from you. Prior makes but a lame compliment to his mistress, “ I'll love thee *o'er again* in age;” for this hints rather a revival, than a continuance of his passion: but I say, I will love thee *o'er* in youth; which shews a constancy of the

same affection, and I hope I may conclude with an allusion to the lines upon the Spectator,

“ ’Tis the same sun, and does itself succeed.”

LETTER CCXXI.

Belmont.

I HAVE suffered my affairs to run into great confusion, by my two last journies to Dublin; for I have not been here these four months. I have been at a vast expence, and nothing done as I directed.—How much I want the sweet support of your charming converse, at present, to assist me, at once, from spleen and labour! two things, which never at the same time afflicted any person, who was not as whimsically compounded, as myself.

However, I have brought my favourite Montaigne with me, for I dare not trust myself alone; and, tho’ I am enamoured of solitude, yet I never retire, but in order to chuse my company; which I cannot always do; when I live in the world. Some Dramatis Persona says, “Death is the being born to Plato’s and to Cæsar’s.” Then surely a philosophical solitude is to live with them. There is this flattering difference between the world and a library, that there you are subject to every fool’s humour, here you can make every wit subject to your’s. It is said, that a man must be a God, or a brute, who can live alone: Be it so! but surely the contemplation of virtue, truth, and nature, being the highest entertainment of angels, may enable a philosophick mind to support retirement, without hanging, or drowning. Mere solitude, or even the most learned leisure, is said to unqualify
a man

a man for the commerce, or even the conversation of the world; and perhaps it does;—but this objection is only from them to you, not from you to yourself. Dancing may be a necessary accomplishment for the stage, but why shall a man practise coupees, who only means to walk? Such hints as these should make a virtuous mind the more enamoured of fields and groves; for sure it is a high recommendation of truth and honesty, that the first would disappoint a courtier's preferment, and the latter marr an attorney's fortune.

I read over a long chapter in Montaigne yesterday, absurdly stiled, *of cruelty*; for the subject is intirely on virtue. I think this essay by much the best of all his works, and well worth frequent reading. I don't know whether any thing, he has said, is the occasion of this observation occurring to me, but I have often thought, that the writers both upon religion, and morality, have said enough about virtue and vice; yet have not sufficiently distinguished between vice and vice; which would be a more useful criticism, as less obvious. I am really afraid that some of the works of our learned divines have hardened more people thro' despair, than ever they reclaimed by repentance; proceeding too much upon a literal construction of that text, "He who is guilty of the breach of any part
" of the law, is guilty of the whole." Which is a doctrine as severe against God, as against man.—For, then, who was born to be saved? My opinion is, that, as there is no vice, which the frailty of human nature may not be led into; so there is no crime, which the divine nature will not pardon, and the most irreligious crime is the despairing of that pardon. The christian religion goes hand in hand with the weakness of human nature; and the very doctrine of repentance, without which no man can be perfect, supposes us to have erred.

Christ was a pattern given us to imitate, not to equal. However, when our saviour wishes the bitter cup to pass by him, and makes that frail ejaculation, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!* he seems to suffer with more weakness, than many mortals have betrayed in death or torments. But surely this was to abate the vain-glory of Stoicism, to humble the pride of self-sufficiency, and to shew us that God, who made us, as we are, indulges human weaknesses even in the most perfect man.

Farewel, my charming sinner! and I wish I had half your virtues to atone for even all my frailties.

Your's, No Saint.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCXXII.

My dear FANNY,

Belmont.

* * * * *
 * * * * *
 * * * * *

What I meant to take notice of in your letters was, to reprimand you for even supposing it possible I should ever cease to love you: This subject, which you too often enter upon, always alarms me; for, if ever I should love you less, it must be owing to yourself. I assure you, that it never once enters into my head, but when you mention it; and, upon such occasions, I naturally reflect upon every circumstance. in our past, present, and future lives, which might possibly effect such a change; which is, by no means, a healthful contemplation. On the contrary, when my thoughts and reflections are left to my own guidance, I direct them

them to your conversation, to your letters, to your kindness to, and confidence in me: I compare you to any other woman, and, taking you all in all, give you your advantage. I beg leave to put you in mind, that this is not the first time, by many, that I have warned you against this indiscretion; but your wit does not always give way to your sense;

“And, when we grasp the happiness we wish,
“We call on wit to argue it away.”

I have taken a great deal of pains, well rewarded, to gain your love; but have taken a great deal more, to teach you how to preserve mine. That my happiness depended upon it, was not so strong a reason to me, as that I believed your's rested upon the same foundation: and I have been always more your friend than your lover; not by exerting the first character, which my sense and reason sufficiently inclined me to; but by restraining the latter, which my heart so strongly impelled me to: and my best love, my first, my last, my only love, shall always find the exercise of both these characters exerted toward her, while there is one quality, in her charming composition, which can be the proper subject of either; or, rather, she is very near being that clever creature, which is capable of happily blending both these affections in one; for which nothing more is necessary, but to use that understanding, upon all occasions, which you are capable of exerting upon some: nor did I mean to be ridiculous, when I said you should not comb your head, or call a coach, without consulting it; for you cannot imagine to what mean and trifling offices good sense will condescend to accompany us; and, perhaps, it is in what the world esteem trifles, that a good understanding

should most employ itself; for great or extraordinary occasions generally direct their own operations.

HENRY.

P. S. There is a * gentleman in the house where I am, at present, who has lately read his recantation, in order to preserve an estate of about 70 l. per annum. He has a brother at Bourdeaux, who is a beneficed priest, from whom he received a letter this morning, so full of fire and brimstone, that it had almost thrown him into a fit of despair: but I had the good fortune to quiet his mind, after a quarter of an hour's conversation; and he begged I would reduce my reasoning upon this subject, into the form of a letter, which he would copy, and send to his brother. I did so; and, as he has just done with it, I send you the original, inclosed.

Dear Brother,

I Received your religious exhortation, and brotherly admonition, which I must acknowledge to be in the stile of a priest, but not in the spirit of a christian; both for the same reason, that it so boldly and ignorantly denounces damnation against those, who differ from you in controverted opinions and forms, even though, in essentials, you should both agree; as if the God of the universe was but a king of one nation of men, and declared war against all those, who refused to submit to the same policy. This I speak, in general, with regard to the uncharitable sentiments of the whole body of christians, against the professors of every other worship, in the rest of the world. But, as

* Edmund Kavanagh.

to the points in question between you and me, let me fairly state the case between us.

We believe and adore the same God, and have the same faith in the Trinity: we also observe the same principles of morality, hinted first to the antient philosophers by the light of reason, and afterwards more fully illustrated, and made obvious to the meaner capacities, by the divine grace of revelation. We both derive our doctrines from the same text of holy writ, and are, therefore, both, of the one only true and universal church.

The only difference, then, between us, is, that in the infancy of christianity, making it's way through the errors of Judaism and Heathenism, it necessarily contracted a great deal of the foulness of superstition in it's passage, and grew up incumbered with many idle forms, and uselefs and absurd ceremonies, which are by no means authorized from scripture. There was likewise a good deal of time-serving in the first preachers after the apostles; for they were but men, and the grace of inspiration ceased with the apostles. These men, then, finding it impossible to propagate this new faith, pure and intire, against the superstitious prejudices of antient and established modes of worship, at least with that dispatch which their zeal required, temporized with the ceremonies and idolatries of the nations round them, in order to be the better received among them. They thought, perhaps, that, as this religion was first established by the power of miracles, it must be maintained so; and then introduced that absurd and unphilosophical doctrine of transubstantiation. They thought too, that to give men hopes of a redemption, even after death, and by the merit of another's devotion, would naturally allure them to the embracing this new faith; and so published the doctrine of supererogation, which unluckily contradicts another,
broached

broached at the same time, of purgatory, in the most express manner; as the last supposes, that no person can be virtuous or religious enough to save his soul intire, before he dies, therefore must necessarily pass through a purgation; and the other supposes, that a man may not only perform sufficient acts to secure himself, but the overplus of his merits may go toward the salvation of another. This contradiction puts me in mind of the old saying, that "Liars should have good memories." Now you are drinking from the polluted stream, while we have recurred up to the pure fountain, and original source. Our religion is deduced from the plain text of the scriptures, your's from the sophistical comments of the priests. When a priest once asked a protestant, where his religion was before Luther, he answered humourously, but not less justly, by asking him, where was his face before it was washed?

As for your doctrine of seven sacraments, which you say we are deficient in, I answer, that we receive the essence of them all in our two; and the fewer heads any proposition is divided into, the less confusion there will be in the comprehension of it.

In short, you seem to have more of the subtilties of the schools, in your reasoning, than the purity of religion, which, the more simple it is, is the more divine.

What you say, with regard to the saints, martyrs, virgins, &c. is not only idolatry, in general, but that particular species of it imbibed by the church with it's nurse's milk; for the assigning separate charges to them, over nations, trades, distempers, perils by land and water, &c. is the same error among Roman catholics, which theologicians attribute to the heathen Romans, who are said to have

have worshipped the only true God, but mistook every attribute for a distinct deity.

I shall trouble you no farther now, upon these subjects; but conclude, that, if religion be your trade, I would have you stick to it; for a better you cannot get, for that purpose: but, if it is your science, quit it for a more virtuous and rational one, and you can hardly go amiss. I am, in true christian charity,

Dear Brother,

Your's, &c.

E. K.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCXXIII.

Racole.

THE heat of the day, and the coolness of my unperforming nag, obliged me to stop here to dinner. When the sun's strength declines, and my horse recovers his, I shall make a desperate push for Castle-Dermot.

Among the parcel of loose papers, which I put into my pocket, for amusement on the road, I find the inclosed letter from Oliver Cromwell to his wife; which I send you, as part of a comment upon Hudibras, which I left you reading. You may observe, from this letter, the hypocritical and fanatic stile of the leading men at that æra, which will give you light into the characters of knight and squire.

Though it is but three hours since we parted, I found I could not eat my dinner without writing to you; for my love is stronger than my hunger. The eagerness of appetite sometimes makes me omit
a grace,

a grace, and sleep too often inclines me to neglect a prayer at night; but at bed, or board, I never forget to think of you, or cease to wish you, most earnestly, a participation of such entertainment, as I can afford you at either.

I shall call at ———, in my road, this evening; where I expect to find the good lady in such a condition, “as is her custom always in the afternoon.”

There is something remarkably odious in this vice in women, as custom and education are against it, and that it has not even the excuse of nature or temptation on its side.

“When women err, let nature be their guide;

“Love has some soft excuse for female pride.”

For my part, I should think the embraces of a harlot chaster than the fondness of such a wife.

What a shocking thing must it be to any woman's reflection, at a sober interval, to think, that, by this vice, she has rendered herself the subject of lust, without being the object of desire! For such must be the consequence, when passions are inflamed, while reason is extinct, and, as the wife of Bath says,

“There is a rule I never knew to fail,” &c.

And what a dreadful situation must that unhappy man be in, who thinks he has no security over his wife's chastity, but the natural abhorrence which her vice creates! For, in such a state, one could only think her a fit paramour for an * incubus, which is a species of dæmon, that is reported to hold criminal commerce with dead bodies. But enough of this vile subject.

Adieu!

HENRY.

* Or Vampire.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCXXIV.

My dearest FANNY,

I HAVE filled one letter so full of business, that I had not room to take notice of the pretty part of your last; but I shall not suffer the post to go out without a letter, intirely in answer to the refined scruples you hint at in your's.

Your love for me does not destroy your present happiness; but rather constitutes it. Those apprehensions, and that uneasiness, which sometimes afflict you, are not, indeed, part of your happiness, but are the natural consequence of it, in tender and delicate minds; for absence, or fear of losing, affects us always, in proportion to the height of our enjoyments. Now those who desire their pleasures to be less, in order to rid themselves of their pains, know not what they wish for: apathy is a wretched exchange, for fond sensations, even with all their incumbrances; and to prefer such an indolence of mind is, as if a man should refuse an estate, because it was subject to quit-rent.

As for your extraordinary notion, that perhaps your love and fondness for me may affect your happiness hereafter, this must be your own fault, and not the nature of the thing, if it should. The love of God, and the love of man, are very different things, and both made our express duties, by distinct commandments: therefore the latter cannot become a crime, of the nature you apprehend, even by it's excess; for parallel lines can never interfere, though extended infinitely: but the smallest portion of mortal love, or any other worldly affection, rises into a sin, when it intersects, or runs
counter

counter to our love of God, the duties of religion, or the morals of virtue. Now there is nothing, surely, in our chaste, sincere, and constant regards, toward each other, which can possibly violate any of these high concerns; but rather strengthen us in them, by inspiring our hearts with the most grateful sense, toward providence, and possessing our minds with the warmest devotion and thanksgiving, to the Almighty, for our mutual happiness.

To a mind rightly formed, the paths of heaven are strewn with roses, not stuck with thorns :

* “ For heaven is paid, when man receives ;
“ T’ enjoy is to obey.”

And the possession of all the pleasures of life, bounded by reason and religion, beyond which alone we taste the bitterness of the draught, leads us not a step out of the road to happiness hereafter ; referring every thing to God, hymning out his praise, and submitting ourselves implicitly, and humbly, to the justice, goodness, and wisdom of the divine dispensations, whenever heaven shall think fit to withdraw any of its *free gifts* from us.

As for the concern and unhappiness we shall unavoidably feel upon the disappointment or loss of those things, which our fond hearts are set upon here, you need not moralize so rigidly upon this subject ; for this grief, like the sighs and tears which are the consequence of bodily pain, will be attributed by him who made us, to the weakness of that nature with which he was pleased to cloath our souls ; and, in either case, it is not our feelings, but the repinings, impatience, or despondency, which create the crime.

* Part of Pope’s Prayer.

You

You see I have here renewed the strain of our former correspondence; for I am always pleased to enter into subjects with you, whenever you give me an opportunity; and, if you would more frequently write to me, in such a manner as your last letter, to shew the delicacy of your sentiment, and the excellency of your heart, you would do yourself infinite service, in the improvement of your own mind and virtue, in the securing of my love and esteem, and, at the same time, afford the most extreme pleasure and pride to my dearest Fanny's constant, sincere, and fond husband,

H E N R Y.

L E T T E R CCXXV.

My dearest HARRY,

I THANK you for both your kind letters:— They are lively emblems of yourself; sensible philosophic, affectionate, and polite.

I am always sincerely pleased, when any little error or weakness of mine gives my ever dear preceptor an opportunity of setting his little pupil right: and the trouble you have taken, on this occasion, is doubly kind; for, as all the present and past actions of your life, toward me, may fully justify the excess of my affection for you, another man might have thought it needless to satisfy the nice scruples of a weak or delicate mind; but thou, the dear dispenser of all heaven's bounty to me, has convinced me, that it is both my duty and happiness, as well as it was my inclination, to indulge that tender, chaste, and inviolable affection, which I feel for thee, thou most deserving of thy sex! nor would I change even those pains thy absence gives me, for the dull insensibility

sensibility in which the common race of mortals pass their lives ; though I confess these pains im-bitter every hour of life ; for even while you are with me, my thoughts are continually filled with the sad idea of our parting ;—and, indeed, it is dreadful to think of passing the morn of life, the season for tender converse, domestic happiness, and social joys, the remembrance of which should gild the down hill path, the evening tide of life, in a state of separation from all we love ! to have the fleeting days of youth pass, like a dream, unmarked by any pleasing æra, or interesting event ! not but I agree with Milton and Shaftsbury, that they know not their own interest, who wish never to be separated from those they truly love ; “ for solitude is sometimes best society ; and short retirement urges sweet return.” But mine is, I think, a perpetual state of banishment ; for the months you are from me appear like centuries, and the few days you are with me fly away like the moments of a dying man, who knows he has but one short hour to live ; or seem, at best, but like the wretched exile’s interval of taking leave for life.

However, I will, henceforward, remember that happiness is reserved for immortality ; and learn to consider those anxieties, which the tenderness of my affection sometimes occasions, as the purchase of that felicity, which it has, and I hope will still continue to produce ; I mean the redoubled joys of meeting.

What you say, with regard to the resentment I expressed upon Tom’s behaviour, is very just ; but I own my nature is warm, and impatient of injuries, especially when they are loaded with the vile weight of ingratitude ; but, believe me, Harry, I have a heart as tender, and a hand as open to soft compassion, and to melting charity, even as your
generous

generous self; but I confess, with a kind of pride not to be described, that, in the stoical habitude of subduing the first impulse of passion, and attending to the dictates of reason and humanity, you have, as in every thing else, a considerable advantage over me. You are, indeed, the steady *rack*, that keeps one even course, and I the unsettled cloud below, liable to the gust of every varying wind, which veers it from its purposed bearing.

There is really something singular in my affection for you, which makes me triumph at every mark of your superiority in sense or virtue, even over myself; and I feel a more exulting pleasure at being excelled by you, than I should in being superior to all the world beside. Perhaps this may be owing to my having placed my chief merit and happiness in the tenderness and excess of my love, (and there alone I will not yield the prize, even to you;) and as every new proof of your worth confirms and justifies the ruling passion of my soul, I am doubly pleased and grateful for it.

I will not yet despair of your success with your *petrified patronymic*; for I depend on your perseverance; and constant dropping wears at length the *marble*: besides, you find that the proposal you made him, two months ago, has at last made its way, and penetrated into his most obdurate brain. So I take it for granted, that your last offer is travelling the same roundabout road, and may, in the same time, arrive, much fatigued with the tedious barrenness of the way, at the same inn; and truly I think an inn a proper simile for his brain, where neither sense nor science take up their rest, where every thing passes in dull rotation, and leaves no more impression than “the remembrance of a guest, who tarrieth but a night.” If I were *Genii of the Black Isles*, mentioned in the Arabian
tales,

tales, I would certainly take measure of him, with my wand, for a compleat suit of marble ; his wig, at least, should “ eternal buckle take in Parian “ stone.”

I should have been glad to have known, from the ossified man, *which* I hear is deposited in Dublin college, whether his mind partook of his body’s disorder, and if his heart grew hard in proportion as his nerves grew rigid ; for if that be the case, I would have the gentleman, in question, anointed with oils, like an Olympic Wrestler ; for indeed I believe an act of generosity would be a gymnastic exercise to him ; and I would have him put to sleep in a tub of goose-grease, to increase his sensibility.

Forgive me, Harry, for making so free ; but I think it is better to laugh than cry, at things which we cannot remedy ; for I do not believe, what poor Lear makes a question of, “ that there is any “ cause, or cure, in nature, for hard hearts.”

Your observation, about Charles’s uneasiness, at being separated from his wife, is, I believe, very just ; for I own I think him incapable of that delicate tenderness, which renders absence painful ; but it is very possible he may be uneasy for the reasons you assign ; the difficulty of disuse, when men are governed more by habit than reason ; the miserable vacuum which this has left in his mind and time, and which he is at a loss how to fill up, &c. for there is not, I believe, a more helpless mortal breathing, or one less qualified for solitude : His poor vague mind is neither imbued with religion or philosophy, nor stored with ideas enough to entertain himself, or any one else, for half an hour ; and, as he is generally much fatigued with business, and cannot read, he must necessarily fall asleep, whenever he is left to himself ; and such a situation would make one regret the loss of any sort
of

of companion; therefore I heartily pity the poor man.

I should be very unhappy, if I doubted the sincerity of your last paragraph; but indeed I do not, for you have given me many kind proofs to illustrate it; and you may believe me, in return, when I assure you, that I would be content to give up half the duration of my life, to be certain of spending the remainder of it with you; which is, however, no great compliment; for all the time you are absent, I consider myself in a state of annihilation, as I am deprived of the principal spring, or movement, which actuates this little machine; or, rather, like a clock, with the striking weight taken off, which is silent, though the pendulum moves, and only expresses itself by the *hand*, as I do now: but, though I am dumb to every one else, I find, as you may have *long* since observed in this *long* letter, a vast inclination of prating away to you; and should go on with this running pattern, without any ground, for an hour or two more, but that the piece of mechanism, I have been alluding to has luckily for you, just now informed me, that the Post-office will be shut in five minutes.

Adieu! Adieu!

FRANCES.

LETTER CCXXVI.

My dearest FANNY,

Belmont.

I SENT to the post yesterday, but had no letter from you; which I should have been extremely uneasy at, but that Kitty sent me one from you to her, which does not say you are worse, though you still complain. I came over here, just after I wrote last to you, and breakfasted with Kitty in

my way. This was but the second time I have seen her, since you left her; which she seems picqued at, and complains that I am grown peevish; for she is one of those, who cannot distinguish between gravity and ill-humour, or knows any difference between reproof and scolding.

I enjoy as much solitude here, as I did lately at Maidenhall; and live after my own manner, which is, not to dine 'till night. I am more the hermit here too, which makes some variety; for I dress my own meals, broil my chops, and roast my potatoes, by my chamber fire; for I chuse them clean; and they are but flatteringly people, who rent this house from me, though they are English, and Protestants. I do assure you, my life, that I grudge myself every morsel I eat in this or any retirement, unenjoyed by thee; and would very chearfully fast three days, for the pleasure of your dining with me the fourth.

As I have a way of philosophizing upon even the most trifling occasions, I have begun to look upon epicurism in a very different light, from what I have always considered it. It is certain, that the epicure has a greater and more frequent enjoyment of life, than a man of vulgar appetite. I grant, that the reducing our wants to as few things as possible, has more of the philosopher in it; but, perhaps, to multiply our pleasures may be the more sensible scheme, within the bounds of reason and innocence. They, who argue against this voluptuousness, may, from the same rule, prohibit a refined taste for letters, painting, or music. But, though they should indulge us a little in (what they call) rational pleasures, they will find, that all their vain philosophy against the enjoyments of sense, is but a certain stoical pride, which would pretend to set human nature above any satisfaction, *which they may have in common with brutes.* I wonder,

wonder, they have not yet attempted to stop our breath and motion, because brutes have both *.

I am, my dearest life, while I have appetite, breath, or motion, your own rational brute.

* However, a person who has attended to this character, in history, may form this alarming reflection, that all the gluttons and epicures were, in other things, men of debauched and vicious morals, Claudius Helio-gabalus, Caligula, Vitellius, Tiberius, Verus, Clodius the tragedian, &c. And on the other hand the most abstemious men, were persons of virtue and benevolence, Augustus, Paulus Æmilias, Alexander Severus, Epaminondas, Socrates, &c.

LETTER CCXXVII.

AS I know it will give my sweet love pleasure, I find a very sincere one in being able to acquaint him, that I am vastly better, than when I wrote last. My cough is somewhat abated, and I have slept tolerably well these two nights.

I fancy, I live as retired, in the midst of a great city, as you in your hermitage. I cook for myself, and drink (rather than eat) by myself; for I live entirely on broth, chocolate, and tea. I find, sops agree with me much better than meat; for I am surely sick, if I touch it.

My wishes for you are not confined to meal-times, nor do I suppose your's are: No moment passes, but I sigh for you: What do I suffer in being separated from thee! When, when shall we meet, to part no more?

I am so far an epicurean, as to believe, that Providence designed a full and perfect use of all its bounties to his creature, man.

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G

“ For

“ For heav’n is paid, when man receives;
 “ T’enjoy, is to obey.”

Else wherefore, with an unwithdrawing hand, -did he create them? It is the abuse of these, which constitutes the crime; and which, in general, bears its punishment in the very commission of it.

“ To the late revel, and protracted feast,
 “ Wild dreams succeeded, and disorder’d rest.”

They, who indulge the gratification of any appetite to excess, are far below the brutes; and to debar ourselves of any enjoyment, within the bounds of innocence and reason, is “ to live like nature’s bastards, not her sons.” Every person’s particular circumstances ought to fix the bounds of their self-indulgence; for there are many gratifications, which would be criminal in me, that may be both reasonable and innocent for a person, who has a large fortune. Where I mistress of ten thousand pounds a year, I would not wish to multiply my desires, (which are now confined within a very narrow compass) because, by not having many of my own, I might gratify others; which is to me the highest enjoyment human nature is capable of. There, indeed, we rise superior to the brute creation, who, I believe, have much the advantage in all sensual pleasures; for theirs are unmolested with intemperance or remorse. Yet I do not think this is a cause for us to spurn the rational enjoyment of those pleasures, we have in common with the animal world: let us rather follow their example in those particulars, where we appear most on a level with them, by following, not oppressing nature; which is, in them, another name for (what we call) reason.

I have

I have been insensibly led into a subject, which, I am conscious, I am by no means capable of treating justly : but you, I am sure, will excuse my errors on this and every other occasion ; as they proceed only from the weakness of my head, not badness of my heart ; which is filled and guarded by your loved idea.

Adieu, my utmost wish, my fond desire, and only hope ! my Life, my Love, adieu !

L E T T E R CCXXVIII.

Dear FANNY,

YOU reproach me gallantly enough with only wishing for your company at board : but indeed, my love, I have one constant, equal earnestness toward you, which is never broke through ; except that I wish for your company with a more particular fondness upon some occasions, when I happen to be in such a situation, or romantic circumstance, as I know would suit your taste, or give you an additional relish to my company. Have you not sometimes, during a constant tenor of health, perceived, at particular periods, a certain lightness of heart, and wantonness of fancy, which you could not account for ? somewhat like the gleam of cheerfulness in the mind, which is raised by the sudden rays of sunshine, breaking through a cloud. Something analogous to this I am frequently sensible of toward you. My love is never less than health ; but my fondness often rises to an excess of ardor, equal to those extraordinary spirits I am alluding to : and, as these flights of the soul seem to be its essays towards a more perfect state, I may be said to love you, in general, like a man ; but, upon such extraordinary occasions, to adore you with the fervor of an angel.

I am extremely pleased at the little essay, I led you into, upon the epicurean philosophy; for, upon all such occasions, my dear little philosopher acquits herself with justness of sentiment, and elegance of expression. I wish greatly, that you had leisure to exert your strength more frequently upon such topics; for, believe no flatterer, you have a native force of mind, which, as some poet expresses it,

“Leaves puzzled learning lab’ring far behind.”

Adieu, my Pleasure!

LETTER CCXXIX.

My dear FANNY,

Maidenbath.

I SEND you inclosed a letter, I had last post, from Tom; which is a great improvement to the uneasy situation I am in at present, and likely to be farther involved in.

* * * * *

I am, my dearest Fanny, in these, and many circumstances, too irksome to trouble you with, extremely to be pitied. I find now the great benefit and blessing of that turn of mind, which I have, for these two years past, endeavoured to cultivate in myself; to prevent the consequences of a very warm, violent, and precipitate disposition of temper, which I was born with, and indulged in too much, during the former part of my life. It is not, when misfortunes come upon us, the time to set about the philosophy of bearing, or the resignation of submitting to them: It is in *health* we should prepare ourselves against sickness,

ness, or the invalid may find his couch his grave.*

I have brought a very severe cold from Belmont, which breaks in upon my scheme of solitude, as it confines me entirely within doors. It has not yet made any attack upon my throat, which is all the danger I ever apprehend from that disorder.

Adieu, my Life, my Love!

* Ad opinionem dolemus; tam miser est quisque quam credit. SEN.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCXXX.

My dearest, sick love,

I AM particularly concerned at your cough; for it is the worst symptom of a cold, and what your slight constitution, inclined to an hectic and decay, is very little able to bear. My love to the India folk, because you say they have been very kind and affectionate to you.

I am displeased at your saying, you are weary of life: It is, at least, unkind, if not something worse: It is the sign of a lowness of spirits, and a carelessness; which is much below your sense, virtue, or religion. I cannot excuse any one for speaking without thought, who is capable of thinking so well. It was said by one of the ancients, "that a patient resignation to necessary evils was next to the merit of a voluntary martyrdom." This was a fine saying in the days of superstitious enthusiasm, when men officiously threw themselves in the way of persecution, in order to merit the eighth beatitude; but, at present, the first virtue, mentioned

mentioned above, stands unrivalled. Let men repine at what misfortune they will, it will be found, upon examination, that their loss of patience is the greatest evil they labour under. The absurd notion of natural right to the good things of this life, occasions our uneasiness at their loss; but consider matters philosophically or religiously, and all the concern vanishes. We cannot challenge a property in any thing, from Providence, in this life; for we were not in a condition to make terms for ourselves, before we came into it; but we should consider ourselves here, in an happy state of establishing an indefeasible right to the highest enjoyments of the next. Neither health or fortune we can call our own; where every thing fluctuates incessantly; and, if our furniture be glass, why should we be surprized at its being broken *? And it is as vain and ridiculous to grieve at any loss of worldly advantage, as it would be to be mortified, because

“ The very air, you breathe this day,

“ The next may help an ass to bray.” †

Which is the only distich, I remember, of a poem, I wrote, some years ago, upon this very subject.

Now observe, *ma seule, et chere mignonne*, that I am not scolding, but only philosophizing; which being premised, I shall go on with an observation I have made, long since, upon one of the beatitudes; I forget which, in order; but the text is, “ Blessed “ are the poor in spirit,” &c. Here is, methinks, an instance, among many, of the difference between the christian and heathen philosophy; which some authors, vain of the natural reason of man,

* *Vitrea vita fruor.*

† *Qui recusat ferre casus humanos, sive plebeii sumus, sive reges, is é vita migret oportet.*

ERAS.

have

have affirmed to be the same. The latter teaches us contempt for riches, and fortitude in misfortunes: but the former inspires us with a resignation to poverty, and patience under sufferings. One but increases the savage fierceness of man's nature into a pride and stoicism above it: The other softens us into a spirit of humility and meekness, not below, but consonant to, the imperfect state of man in this life. While men, either before, or during their ignorance of, revelation, considered themselves only with regard to this life, perhaps the heroism of stoic philosophy might sufficiently answer the purposes of human nature, in this confined view: but of what use are virtues, sentiments, or affections, cultivated here, which can never be exerted in that state, where there will be no pomps fit to condemn, or misfortunes to oblige us to suffer? while the spirit of meekness and humility will sufficiently answer our ends here, and is the proper temper to prepare us for the enjoyment of love, and contemplation, which are the occupations of *the blest above*.

As your cold has probably taken away what little appetite you had, I shall send you up, by Thursday's stage, a crock of the finest pickled walnuts, you ever saw or tasted. I wish I could send you some of my mutton, as little, and as sweet, (but somewhat fatter) as yourself. My hams, however, will soon come, and I shall carry up some of them for you.—Sweet, good night!

Take notice, that I always kiss my letters going to you, as I do those I receive from you; and have just put my lips to the expression, "the blest above," thy sole superiors.

HENRY.

LETTER CCXXXI.

FRANCES to HENRY.

My dearest Life,

A MIDST the noise and impertinence, I am at present surrounded with, I am indeed utterly incapable of answering your very elegant treatise; but incumbered as I am with multitudes, I can love and thank you for it. Indeed, my sweet love, you can reconcile me to any misfortune, but your absence; for, while you prove, from philosophy and religion, the trifling *value*, we ought to set on what are called the good things of this life, you still enhance your *own*. My love, my friendship, my esteem, seem to increase daily, though it is long since I thought I had arrived at the highest degree of each, for thee, my life, my love!

I thank you for your intended present: I doubt not their being excellent; but, alas! unshared by thee, what delicacy can please? Haste then, my love, to give me a relish for every enjoyment; for I neither know, wish, nor hope for any, but in thee.

While I pressed the dear spot, which thou hadst blessed with the impression of thy lips, I found a joy, which might indeed be felt even by angelic natures; unmixed with any passion, that might disgrace an angel; my soul seemed ready to issue at my lips, in hopes of meeting thine. None, but those who love like you and me, can have an idea of such pleasures.

I have spent the day at your brother's, where there are a little hundred met to be merry: they pity my melancholy; for, indeed, I am not gay:
but

but I feel a higher satisfaction, than the broadest mirth is capable of, in subscribing myself, faithfully and affectionately,

Your's,

FRANCES.

L E T T E R CCXXXII.

HENRY to FRANCES:

I AM at a loss to know, whether my love or pride is most gratified at your kind acceptance of those little occasional essays, which I sometimes send you, for your amusement, or guidance in life; but I shall refer the satisfaction to my love, as that comprehends my best and highest pride too. It is but just in me to make you some return of that philosophy, which you have taught me: but in this science you are infinitely my superior; for I can but create in you a disregard for the things stiled of this world, merely by shewing their trivialness and vanity in themselves; but you have inspired me with an utter contempt of them, by putting them in comparison with your own worth. However, my philosophy is neither of the cynic or misanthrope kind: I have neither an aversion to men or things; for I can very well indulge myself with both; but then I consider them like a dream or a feast, which serve as amusements for the time, and leave either no longing, or a satiety, behind. Indeed, I take the true use of philosophy to be, not to vex ourselves in prosperity, but to comfort us in adversity. In short, we need not be so rigidly on our guard against the pleasures of this life; for they seldom happen, or continue long enough to soften or emasculate our natures: but disappointments

ments or misfortunes are the things, which are most familiar to us; and yet, by our uneasiness, seem the things, which we are least used to. Most of the mortifications, we complain of, are what we owe to one another; a great many of which may be avoided, if we justly considered men but as tools. An instrument, which has not sharpness enough for a razor, may have strength sufficient for a paring-shovel; and that, which has not hardness for an hammer, may have proper weight for a mallet. Now, to instance in men: *G. F.* would make a miserable confident; but, if you are to make an apology, he can tell an admirable lye for you. *J. S.* is not of stuff to make a friend, but nobody directs a coachman to *Chapel-Izod* better. *H. D.* indeed, cannot write letters; but sure he can carry them to the post. *H. G.* would be but an indifferent comforter in affliction; but then he can make you laugh, and forget it. So that a tolerable judgment, upon the different characters of mankind, may help us to work some useful end, even out of the worst and meanest: and, as to the evils and goods of life, a religious sense of them will be found to be the only true philosophic one—to consider the first as a reprobation of our faults, and so amend; and the latter as a reward of our virtues, and so persevere.

I took a solitary walk in my fields this evening, contemplating upon such subjects as these; and think, I never observed a more beautiful western sky, at the setting of the sun. This shall be the test with me, whether there be a true poetical genius in this island, at present; for such a one must certainly, like *Prometheus*, catch fire at the sun in so much glory: for no person can be eminent in this art, who has not a strong enthusiasm about the beauties of nature; nor without a certain inspired, though not an acquired knowledge of the philo-

sophy

sophy of it too. What are all the hints and allusions to arts and sciences, some of them unknown to the world, and others supposed to be so to himself, which the commentators mark out in Homer's works, but a sort of præ-sentiment, or, as it were, a flight at science, which duller mortals were forced to earn thro' the labour of academies? I think, such instances as these, with dreams, and many other proofs of stronger force, may be brought as arguments for the independance of the human soul upon matter: for, though we should allow the materialists, that the knowledge, we attain from the deductions of reasoning or reflection, may be but the natural effect of the animal spirits upon the fibres of the brain, which is the unintelligible jargon they speak; yet surely the discoveries, we sometimes make, without any deduction at all, cannot be accounted for from the mere organization of matter, but must arise from a certain impulse foreign to it.

Adieu, my Love!

HENRY.

· H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCXXXIII.

My dear FANNY,

I AM here attending the assizes, and enjoyed but one day at home. I must be confined here this week, but depend upon the Alto Relievo of your charming letters, to bear me thro' it; one of which I received yesterday, and expect two more, before I return to Maidenhall.

I do assure you, as a truth, that I have not felt the least symptom of the cholic, since I left Dublin.

In short, there is something extraordinary in my disorder; for surely the cure of so remarkable a case could not be so suddenly or so slightly performed; for I live as usual, except in one particular, that I go supperless to bed, and rise early. If this be my remedy, it is a very easy one, when absent from you: for what entertainment shall retain me at board, or what pleasure detain me in bed, when you, my society and happiness at both, are distant from me?

I here send you my answer to ——'s genteel letter.

The prologue, you sent me, is, in general, very well, has a good turn and spirit of poetry in it; but there is one vile line, as it has but a simple meaning in itself, and no sort of context with the rest:

“ To greet his shade this grateful night we give.”

“ A foe to folly, but the friend of man,” is an old line: I think, it is in Rochester's poem upon Dorset's satires, where also is this line, “ The best good man, with the worst-natur'd muse.” But somewhere, I am sure, I have seen it before.

Adieu, my master-work of art and nature; whom no satire can invest without, nor adulation can corrupt within! Farewel, while I do so; for our happiness is one!

The post is come in, and no letter from you—Unkind!

LETTER CCXXXIV.

I AM not, my dearest Harry, a sufficient mistress of language to express the heart-felt pleasure, which your letters give me: they fill my mind with *such a kind of rapture*, as arises from reflecting on
any

any extraordinary benefit, we have received from Providence : it is a mixture of praise, gratitude, and love. Indeed, every act of kindness of your's raises me to the best and truest devotion. I admire and bless the greatness and goodness of that Almighty Being, who formed thee ; while my heart overflows with the most thankful sense of his unmerited benevolence, in being graciously pleased to make thee mine.

You say, you have enjoyed but one day at home, since we parted ; and I have been but one day abroad : so we remain equal debtors to pleasure, if that term may be justly applied to any circumstance, time, or place, I meet with, in your absence.

You have already, I hope, received my excuse for not writing by Thursday's post—*Unkind!*—how couldst thou deem me so ?

I will not, because I cannot, tell you how sincerely I rejoice at hearing you have got the better of your cholic. I have not had any return, that signifies, of my disorder ; but am still very lame, and suffer much from the rheumatism.

I think your letter to — an excessive clever one : it shews, at once, the man of sense and business ; but still you say nothing of your own affairs, and seem more inclined to advise, than engage with him.

I hear, lady O — is to be in town in a few days ; so think it needless to write. I have not any thing new to acquaint you with : every thing and person are just in the same situation, you left them.

Adieu, my Love !

FRANCES.

LETTER CCXXXV.

Dear FANNY,

I RECEIVED your letter; and, since you are well once more, observe, that I will never give you *credit* for being sick again; and I hope you will never have discredit for being irregular, to which, believe me, all your complaints are owing. At the same time, I disclaim any compassion from you too, when I am ill again of my old disorder; for, from the discontinuance of it, since I left town, I am convinced, that early hours, and superfluous slumbers, are the absolute cure for it. As truly as that vice produces vice, excesses, being of the same nature, beget each other. We ought certainly to sit up after supper; then we shall, as surely, lie a-bed in the morning; and consequently, a late breakfast falls too suddenly upon dinner; then a slight repast keeps back the natural appetite 'till night, when the irregularity must, of course, begin again. And yet the cure is easy; for, but any one excess in this rotation being omitted, the whole will fall again into its due order; as, by stopping any single point of a circle, you arrest the whole.

Just as I had gone so far, a poor boy begged at my door, in the stile of a poor scholar, and modestly asked for nothing but paper. It seems, he is orphan'd both of father and mother, and lives from cottage to cottage in the parish where he was born. The boy had a good honest look, and I took him into Thompson's shop, and bound him apprentice. I am pleased with the thought of what charming surprize it will be to-morrow to the whole parish, when they inquire after their foundling, to hear, that Providence met him begging in
the

the way, had charity for him; and bound him to a trade.

I am very glad to hear, that *our* lady is coming to town; but would not have you decline writing to her, on that pretence. You can say many prettier and genteeler things in a letter, than you could in person; and writing, such as your's, to such taste and understanding as her's, has confirmed more lasting friendships, than ever conversation did.

I have not hinted any thing to this house about my correspondence with —; nor shall I, 'till I see the event of it. If it should not answer your expectations, I will not speak of it at all. I would not, for fifty guineas, I had not proceeded as far as I did; but my failing of success will not give me one shilling's worth of concern. I should be uneasy at having passed over, through neglect or inadvertency, any opportunity, Providence had thrown in my way; but more particularly in this case, as you were the index, which pointed out the occasion: but I have a turn of mind, that reconciles me to a disappointment in any affair of life, which does not happen through my own fault.

Adieu, my comfort! my only coadjutor to my own conscience, farewell!

L E T T E R CCXXXVI.

My dearest FANNY,

I RETURNED this day extremely fatigued from the assizes; and, having roved through my gardens and fields, and looked over my manufactures, while it was light, I have but little more time, than to write one letter more to —, and to make a copy of it for you. As our correspond-
ence

ence will be then closed, I may expect the event of it soon ; which, whatever it may be, you shall be immediately informed of. Perhaps, after I have given him the complete plan of operation, he may indeed proceed upon it, like Hudibras profiting of Ralpho's gifts, but may employ some other person to execute it for him. Why then there is but so much ink and paper wasted, for trouble I make no account of : and all I shall regret, is the precious time I have thrown away, which might have been so much more agreeably employed in writing to you ; which though, in fact, I have not neglected, yet I have wanted leisure to exert my faculties in the manner, I should do, to your charming apprehension.

Next Monday I go to Belmont to settle *your* affairs in that province.

I am, my dearest Fanny, your faithful trustee, and indefatigable agent.

LETTER CCXXXVII.

INDEED, my sweet Harry, I am very ill of a violent cold, which I have got, without knowing how. I have a cough, that would deafen you, if you was near me : it almost shakes me to pieces, and hinders me from sleeping the whole night. If I am not better, I will be bled on Monday. Take notice, I am neither peevish, nor low-spirited ; and only mention my illness, by way of conversation.

Tho' I am utterly ignorant of every thing, which relates to the scheme of your letters to —, I dare, from my own opinion, pronounce it a perfect one ; for sense, like truth, will strike conviction on any intelligent mind, without the help of demonstration.

I am sincerely glad to find you returned to your sweet retirement. May every pleasure, which virtue, sense, health, and tranquility can bestow, attend my dearest life! And be assured, my dear Harry, there is nothing in this world can so much alleviate the pains of absence, and the many other disagreeable circumstances, which attend my present situation, as the thoughts of your being happy; and I solemnly declare, I would not, for any consideration, be persuaded, that you felt as much concern from our separation, or wished as ardently for me, as I do to be with you. There is a kind of romantick justice in this sentiment, which pleases me, and, I hope, will not offend you; for, as you have such a vast superiority over me, in every virtue, every charm, the only pre-eminence, I aspire to, is that of loving most: believe me, it is a painful one; and yet I will not part with it, nor bear to be rivalled, or outdone, in this my single merit, even by thee.

Adieu!

FRANCES.

L E T T E R CCXXXVIII.

My dear FANNY,

I HAVE three of your letters lying before me now, which I had not time to answer or remark upon before; as you know the hurry, and complication of business, I am engaged in.

As to —, whom you mention, I have not heard one syllable, since his first, and only letter to me. Tho' he said then, he was to stay at — for a fortnight; which time was not elapsed, before he had my last letter; yet, perhaps, he did not stay as long as he designed, and might have
gone

gone home, before I had finished my essay. This may account for the delay of hearing from him : or, perhaps, he has taken time to consider, and consult some friends about it. But as I said in a former letter on this head, I was so prepared, as not to suffer any disappointment, from the very first of my application to him ; so shall trouble myself no more about the matter, unless I hear from him again ; and then it shall be as a new affair to me.

You have renewed a subject, which we have had frequent disputes about ; that my sense is better than your's, but your love greater than mine. Now I shall still argue both these points with you ; and the latter, I hope, I shall make, at least, doubtful, during our lives. If I have a stronger sense, you have a prettier one ; and, if I appear to have any advantage over you, in the humility of your opinion only, it is more owing to the fortitude of my mind, than the excellence of my understanding. As to the second point, it is out of debate, as you seem to have given it up, by the first ; for a man must love you in proportion to his understanding.

I did not mean to scold, but warn my pet, when I hinted at irregularities ; which, I apprehended, was the occasion of the heavy cold, you complained of. What I meant was sitting up, and lying in bed, late ; both of which are very bad, in a *double* sense, at present. But I am quite easy, since you have promised to conform to the rules, I shall prescribe to you : as you likewise know my sentiments already, I need not repeat them ; for I have that confidence in you, that you will strictly govern yourself by them. Nor need I endeavour to give them weight, by hinting to you, that not only your own health and spirits, but the health, strength, and happiness of that, which may, one day, be as dear to you as your own, entirely depend upon the prudent

prudent regimen of yourself, at this time. I am up every morning at five, tho' I do not go to bed 'till twelve; and, notwithstanding the labour of body, and anxiety of mind, I go through all the day, I feel such chearfulness and flow of spirits about me, owing to this alone, that I cannot contain myself from singing and dancing about my fields, like one stung by the Tarantula.

I have now gone through your three letters, and am sorry they are at an end; for, like a person used to speak from notes, I have nothing more to say, but—that

I am, my charming girl, no less your's, than ever, and I cannot say more.

HENRY.

A second letter is wanting here, which this seems also to answer.

L E T T E R CCXXXIX.

My dearest HARRY,

I AM still a poor lonely wretch. Judge, from your own heart, how earnestly I wish for you, and how tenderly and constantly my thoughts are employed in lamenting your absence, and the cruel necessity which occasions it. It is now a month, by common calculation, since we parted; what a length of time, when measured by the pangs of absence! and yet you do not speak of coming to me. I envy you the complicated hurry of business, you are engaged in: it divides your anxiety, and prevents your thinking too earnestly on any one subject. I rejoice at it, while I feel the uneasiness of having my every sentiment and idea fixed on
the

the only object which can give me pain or pleasure, thy dear self alone.

Your kind, your charming letter has, indeed, raised my spirits to an higher degree of cheerfulness, than they have known, for some time past: but while the elegant tenderness, which you there express, elates my heart to a kind of rapture, it necessarily increases my sorrow for our separation:

“ So mourning comes, by bliss convey’d,

“ And ev’n the sweets of love allay’d.”

My dearest life may be perfectly assured, that there is no enjoyment, however dear to me, that I would not readily sacrifice to the pleasure of obliging him: for this reason, I was picqued at your seeming to suspect me of irregularity. Take my word, that the dear little object of our mutual care, and, I hope, bliss, shall not suffer through any fault of mine, that I can avoid. I am in bed every night by twelve, and up at nine. If my lying so long be a fault, I will not cover it with a falsehood: but if you knew the many restless and uneasy hours I pass in bed, you would more wonder at my rising so early, than at my lying so late. You must allow something to the weakness of my condition, and consider the vast difference between this, and my former way of living; and you will find my nine almost equal to your five in the morning.

I am surprized ——— has not wrote to you; but not at your sentiments on the occasion. They are consistent with that good sense and steadiness of mind, which accompanies my dear practis philosopher through every action of his life.

Adieu, my dearest Harry! May we never be able to determine the only point, which I hope, and
believe,

believe, we shall ever dispute on ! and may each incessantly endeavour, through the course of our lives, to make the only coveted or contested superiority between us (that of loving most) appear doubtful, even to our latest moments.

Adieu !

LETTER CCXL.

Dear FANNY,

I PITY you not for being alone, knowing your mind, and the use you are capable to make of it ; though, by your mentioning your solitude in such a forlorn way, I am afraid you have not a proper set of books to read. Indeed your present study is but thinly scattered with them ; and mere amusement is but a sorry comfort in solitude ; which requires the best helps of reflection, moral philosophy, and religion, to support ; which light reading is but ill qualified to afford us. I do not mean to make you an abstracted enthusiast, by the study I shall recommend to you : but what I shall prescribe will not only qualify you for retirement, but for the world too ; at least, for that part of it, which is worthy of your sense, spirit, and virtue, to hold society with. When you have engaged in such a course of dead authors, you will have the less reason to lament my absence ; for you will there find, much better, that sense, philosophy, and virtue, which you are so partial to compliment me with ; and the real excellencies of those things may, perhaps, be as dead in me, as they are in them.

I do not mention my going to you, because the time was fixed already for that, which is about the
time

time of your * — &c. and you know my situation too well, to desire it seriously sooner.

My pet, you surely could not imagine I expected you should be up at five in the morning. I only mentioned my own practice, to vaunt myself, not to prescribe to you; and shall be satisfied with cutting you off only one hour in the morning: but, to shew you how indulgent I shall be to you, at the same time, I will allow you to go to bed an hour, or even two, earlier, at night.

— has played a very knavish prank lately, with regard to me. Tom can inform you: but I shall not expose him, for two extraordinary reasons; because I do not believe any other man would decline it; and because I have a sincere picque to him, upon an occasion, I mentioned to you, some time ago.

Adieu! my heart's transport.

HENRY.

* L'accouchment.

LETTER CCXLI.

My dear FANNY,

I INCLOSE you this paper, because it relates to the subject of one of my late letters, about reading. I send it to you more for your amusement, than instruction; as you need no hint of this kind: nor, indeed, do I think reading itself any otherwise necessary to my charming philosopher, than to direct or adapt your thoughts to proper studies; for an ant, or a straw, which gave you occasion to exercise your own reflections, would answer the end as well. Give but fair play to the ingenious nature inhabiting the breast, my proudest mansion,

and all human learning were superfluous to thee. Happy for mankind, if arts and sciences were merely so ! As all states thrive best upon their proper forces, so these, like auxiliaries, though called in as friends, often remain as tyrants.

I am well. Amen to you !

A letter is missing here.

LETTER CCXLII.

FRANCES to HENRY.

THOUGH I am thoroughly convinced, that my letters cannot afford you the least entertainment, yet I think it in some measure incumbent on me to acknowledge yours ; as insolvent debtors are more frequently obliged to make promises to their creditors, than those who are able, but not willing, to pay. Like them too, my oft-repeated thanks only prove my poverty ; but, were I capable of making any other return, I would rather pay, than own, the debt. You must then, my dear teacher, accept the little all, I have to offer, as freely, as I give it ; my love, esteem, and gratitude, which are, indeed, sincerely your's.

I am afraid to write any more, lest I should enter into the Melpomene strain ; for, notwithstanding all your precepts, I cannot, will not be satisfied, while you withhold my primum mobile, your dear self, from me. Indeed, Harry, though you do not know it, your philosophy renders you cold and indifferent to me ; else how is it possible for you to abstain from even wishing to be with me ?—Hang up philosophy !—I will have done.—You shall not be teased with my complaints, though sure I have
much

much cause to be uneasy; for, in thy absence, joy is seen no more —

May the health and chearfulness, which is fled from me, be doubled to my love, and I will not regret them.

Adieu, my dearest Harry!

FRANCES.

L E T T E R CCXLIII.

My dear FANNY,

AS I have had no letter from you last post, I shall employ that portion of time, which is more particularly dedicated to you three times a week, in communicating to you such reflections as occur to me, at present; which I take just in the very order they succeed one another in my own mind.

I am, forsooth, a great philosopher:—I practise it in myself, and perform it to all the world. In the severest trials, I think I should be able to exhibit myself to the satisfaction of all spectators. In a gaol, I could comfort myself with these reflections: “ Here I can enjoy a perfect vacation from
“ all business or care: all solicitude after honours,
“ and all anxiety about fortune, are useless here,
“ because incompatible with my present state. I
“ can here give up my whole time to reading and
“ contemplation, without the reproach of idleness;
“ and can here indulge my much loved solitude,
“ without the imputation of a misanthrope singu-
“ larity. Here my occupation and my leisure are
“ all my own; for few intrude upon the wretch’s
“ levee. Welcome the interruption of those that
“ do; for he must be a friend indeed, who seeks
“ us in a gaol. Happy then, thrice happy state,
“ which, at the same time, proves our virtue, and
“ approves

“ approves our friends !” Even in the day of sickness, and the night of death, could I sustain the pains, and survey the terrors, with an unshaken mind, from this soliloquy : “ Grant, just God, “ that the vices, errors, and follies, of my past “ intemperate youth, may be opposed, at the great “ day of account against the humane offices I have “ performed in act, and the general benevolence I “ have always had in will, even to the vast circle “ of all created or possible beings of the universe ; “ and, in this hope, welcome thou glorious death, “ so much dreaded, because so little understood ?

“ Welcome, thou cordial to a troubled breast,
 “ The softest remedy, that grief can find ;
 “ The gentle spell, that lulls our cares to rest,
 “ And calms the ruffling passions of the mind !

“ Thou happy minute, the first of immortality,
 “ how have men traduced thee, by comparing
 “ thee to a long sleep ! but sleep is a tedious death,
 “ while death is but an instant sleep.”

Yet, with all this appearance of philosophy, I am prone to anger, passion, and resentment ; and, though I am sufficiently aware of this foible, and set the whole force of my reason against it, I am not master enough of myself to preserve my temper sometimes, upon the slightest provocation, even of the folly of a child. Now what is the reason of such remarkable inconsistency in my character, has been the subject of this hour’s contemplation ; and I have attributed it to this ; that nature must universally prevail, and will always be found too strong for art. In the first instances, I mentioned to you, I owe my philosophy to an happy turn of constitution and genius ; to a certain carelessness about, and sovereign contempt for the things of this life, when they are out of my power, though nobody enjoys them more, when they are within my reach ;

and an elevated hope, and strong conviction of the enjoyments of the other world; by the frequent contemplation of which I have happily improved nature into a habit of philosophy: but, in the latter case, I am almost afraid art will never be able to conquer nature; though, at some times, it may govern, or disguise it; because, perhaps, trifling occasions do not sufficiently call upon my philosophy to exert itself; and no army is so soon overcome, as that which too much despises its enemy.

Adieu!

LETTER CCXLIV.

YOUR letters fill me, at once, with the extreme pleasure, and the tenderest concern. My heart melts in me, while I read thy thoughts: A kind of a gentle tremor throbs my breast, which is not to be described, nor understood by any, who have not felt the extremes of joy, and grief, which I have known for thee. The little understanding I am mistress of is charmed with your truly philosophic sentiments: but the fond woman is hurried into grief and madness, at the bare mention of those subjects, which are, indeed, the real but severe trials of our religion and philosophy. I have many times been so weak (you, perhaps, may call it cruel) as to lament the possibility of your dying. I am certain, I shall never be able to think of your death, either in a christian or philosophic light. Let me intreat you never to mention it more: indeed I cannot bear the thought.—“Forlorn of thee, whither should I betake me? where subsist?” Oh! if you love me, Harry, the single consideration of my distress, in being torn from thee, should make you even anxious to delay your future happiness. You would not call the moment
of

of our separation an happy one, were thy soul linked to mine, as mine to thee.

“ Oh ! the soft commerce ! oh ! the tender ties,

“ Close twisted with the fibres of the heart ;

“ Which broken, break them—and drain off the soul

“ Of human joy, and make it pain to live !—

“ And is it, then, to live, when we two part ?

“ 'Tis the survivor dies.—My heart, no more !”

I doubt not but you will think my tenderness, upon this occasion, entirely selfish : indeed I grant it is so ;—for I would leave thee, Harry ; with transport leave thee ! well knowing that my death would be conducive to thy happiness. Your religion and philosophy would prevent the effects of your natural tenderness.—My little, happy spirit (for such, I doubt not, it would be) should minister unseen to thy gentle sorrow, and bring thee peace and comfort from above. My mind is somewhat cheered by this last hope.

I shall conclude my letter here, as it would be the art of sinking, to mention even our meeting in this world ; which, indeed, I begin to despair of ; but, in a strong hope of our future happiness, I subscribe myself,

Eternally your's,

FRANCES.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCXLV.

FRANCES to HENRY.

I AM vastly uneasy at not hearing from you last post. I have a thousand apprehensions, lest some accident should have befallen my heart's treasure ;

sure; for I am sure he is not capable of neglecting me. The badness of the weather adds to my concern. Every drop of rain, shrinks me, as if it touched my heart, when I think that thou, its dearest part, art, perhaps, exposed to it. I work myself into an hundred different terrors, on your account; yet still I hope that God, in whom we trust, will protect and save thee from every danger: "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

I flatter myself, that to-morrow's post will bring me glad tidings: 'till then, I will endeavour to suspend my fears; but, for the present, my mind is too much disturbed to allow my writing on any subject, that could afford you the least entertainment. What would I not give to be with you this moment? I should find more joy in being wet, dirty, and tired, on that occasion, than all the pleasures of this world can give me. I have often longed for Gyges' ring; but never so much as now. I have frequently amused myself with thinking of the extreme pleasure I should have in surprising you with my presence, at the very moment you were, perhaps, lamenting my absence, or wishing for me to share in the rational delight, you sometimes receive, from a fine passage in a favourite author. This whim has entertained me much; and, by the force of fancy, I have spent many delightful hours in your museum, when you little thought I was so near you. I have, in the same manner, accompanied you many a mile in your evening walks, and held long conversations with you, though you, perhaps, never uttered a syllable, during the time of such imaginary discourse. I never found any thing in castle-building half so pleasant as this:—It annihilates both time and space, and brings us together, in spite of the severity of that ill fate, which parts us. But I
hope

hope soon to see this, and all other imaginary joys, realized in the substantial bliss of seeing and conversing with thee, my dearest Harry.

I am in some concern about my two last letters directed to Maidenhall, as you left home before they could reach you. There was one of them inclosed in your brother's, which I fear your uncle has opened.—Let me know their fate, as soon as you are acquainted with it.

Adieu, my heart's delight! I am, with love, truth, and constancy, ever your's.

FRANCES.

LETTER CCXLVI.

Callen.

I HAVE passed a very disagreeable time of it, since I set out; for the hosts, I have met with, thought the best way to make me welcome was to make me drunk. Consider how irksome it must be, for a man to be forced to a thing, which he does not like, who does not even care to be pressed to what he does. What a terrible thing must it be for one, who hates drink, to be obliged to it, without any inducement toward it; to keep company with men, that I would rather even get drunk than converse with; and yet to be under the necessity of doing both at the same time. At —, I was ill-treated with corporation politics, and four claret; and at —, with puns and beer. At length, I have escaped hither, to my agreeable friend W. B. where I shall, as it were, perform quarantine, before I betake my impatient steps toward thy feast of reason.

I am, my dearest girl,

Eternally your's,

HENRY.

LETTER CCXLVII.

THOUGH I think I have been pretty much used to disappointments, I find I am not yet philosopher enough to bear them without a sensible chagrin. Perhaps it is owing to the punctual exactness of my own disposition, that I am hurt at the most trifling breach of promise, when committed by any person, for whom I have the least regard. For these reasons, I have felt more uneasiness at the frequent disappointment of my expectations, with regard to your coming to town, than I should from a certainty of your not coming these six months.—But a truce with the subject; for I am determined never to mention it more.

I am mighty glad you have escaped from the disagreeable circumstances you mention, and are so happy with your agreeable friend. As it is not in my power to make you amends for the loss of his conversation, I shall not detain you longer, than while I subscribe myself,

Sincerely your's,

FRANCES.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCXLVIII.

My dear FANNY,

I AM sincerely concerned at the bad state of health, you are in, at present: but have a good heart, my own dear pet, for you will be much better of the *next*; so let not this discourage you.

I am extremely well pleased to find you are at your aunt's now; but am afraid of the disturbance, *you apprehended* from the trade carried on in the
back-

back-yard. I beg to know immediately, how you like your situation, in every particular; and every instance of kindness or good-nature, you meet with from any of your friends, who are therefore more mine, shall be ever acknowledged by me with more than thanks. If I have a thought, but what tends to my dear Fanny's happiness, to her proper and honourable establishments in life, may I be as much disappointed in the faithless wish, as I am certain I should be in the worthless experiment!

Adieu, my dear, charming fugitive! oh, when may my doors, as well as my arms, be open to receive thee, thou most welcome and much desired guest?

Farewel, 'till then, thy impatient exile!

L E T T E R. CCXLIX.

I AM sincerely pleased at finding my dear Harry in such a cheerful mood; though what you jest with, like the fable of the boys and frogs, has been almost death to me; nor am I able to enjoy the little relaxation from pain, which I am, at present, blessed with, from the dreadful certainty of what I have yet to undergo.

It was, indeed, very lucky for me, that I got to my aunt's: she has behaved with great care and tenderness, the want of which must have added greatly to my sufferings, if not immediately endangered mine, and the poor Bab's life. As to the noise, I must compound for it, and endeavour to bear with one inconvenience, where there are so many conveniencies.

I cannot help telling you, that I think our friends in — have behaved very ill to you. I had no claim to their friendship or regard; but I think they should have rejoiced in any opportunity

of shewing their gratitude and affection to so near a relation, and kind a benefactor. The particulars of their conduct I refer to our meeting, which I hope and believe will be soon. Observe, that I have never seemed to take the least notice of their behaviour, nor shewn any kind of pique or resentment at it. By this you may perceive, your example has not been thrown away. I strive to copy it, though convinced I shall never, in any thing, arrive at the same degree of perfection; and, I assure you, I scarce engage in the most trifling action, without asking myself, would my Harry, if present, approve my doing so? or, how would he act in the same circumstances? So really anxious am I to become thy epitome.

I hope I shall keep up a little longer, to gather strength and spirits for the approaching æra; and that Bab and I may live to thank you for the kind assurances of your present and future regard. Adieu!

FRANCES.

LETTER CCL.

My dear FANNY,

I HAVE this day begun my * great buildings, &c. The boldness of my undertakings, with the amazing success of my achievements, surprises even myself; but is a matter of miraculous wonder to the rest of the world. Yet it is impossible to conceive, without having tried, how much may be compassed by the help of a little thought, spirit, and perseverance; referring the success ultimately to providence, which has hitherto, in a good hour.

* Mills, bleach-yard, &c.

bs:

be it spoken, favourably attended every one of my bold and desperate undertakings. So prosper me still, as I mean honour to you, my truest love, and to your children ! for whom I begin to feel already a father's fondness, say rather a grandfather's ; for I have always behaved to you, as a favourite child ; cherishing you for your own advantage, and thwarting you only for your good.

The compliment, you make, of setting me for your example, is higher than my merits : You need no better pattern than the fair exemplar in your mind, whenever you are pleased to reflect your own thoughts upon it ; and for this purpose, if you consider me as your monitor only, it will be the highest favour, I shall pretend to.

Adieu, my sweet pupil !

L E T T E R C C L I .

I DID not receive your's of the 9th, till a few hours ago. This delay, joined to your late silence, threw me into a situation very little short of distraction. I have not slept two hours at a time since Thursday, and have almost blinded myself with crying. As you have been always so exactly punctual in writing, I must say it was unkind to miss a post at this particular time. My spirits, weakened and worn out by bodily pain, sunk under the most dismal apprehensions. I imagined you had met with some dreadful accident ; or, at best, concluded that your uncle had intercepted my letters. Heaven be praised, my fears were groundless ! but let me intreat you, my dear Harry, to write constantly for the future, though your leisure should afford but a single line. I know you think it extremely silly to be uneasy on such occa-

sions ; but indeed I cannot help it, and must therefore beg your indulgence to this particular weakness.

As I am sure all your undertakings are founded on reason and virtue, it would be arraigning providence to doubt their success. May he ever bless, prosper, and preserve my love ! and then, though he afflict me, I shall not complain.

I am not offended at your making so light of my present sufferings : “ Thou canst not speak of “ what thou dost not feel.” But I am affronted, you take no notice of my favourite * Elfrida : if you do not like it, let me beg you not to tell me so : for I am vain enough to fancy there is a strong parity between her sentiments and mine.

Adieu, my dearest life,

FRANCES.

* A dramatic writing which she had sent him.

LETTER CCLII.

THOUGH you caution me about speaking my opinion freely about Elfrida, I must not be confined or restrained by any thing but my own judgment, as far as that will go.

The author's prefatory letters shew him to be a better critic, than his work shews him to be a poet. There are some pretty turns, which any one, who *imitates*, may write : But the soul of poetry is wanting ; which I am certain of, from my not *feeling*, through the whole ; and a work must be very slight and insipid, which amuses only the fancy, without affecting the heart. I will not allow any thing to make us *wiser*, which does not make us better ; and the cold inanimate contemplation

plation of moral beauty is not sufficient for this. He, who said, virtue need but be seen, to be adored, expressed himself but faintly; I say, she must be felt.

But to return — Orgar is a vile, unnatural brute, who would prostitute his daughter to the honour of being a king's mistress. Athelwold is but a poor character through the whole; and, as to Elfrida, I will not compliment her so much, to say there is any parity between your sentiments and hers. She seems in her first speech, to be piqued, in pride, that she is not more publicly manifested to the world; talks high of Orgar's daughter, courts, &c. I think her rather like * Semele, than you; and that impatient temper of her's, jealous of his love in absence, and, not without murmur, submitting to the prudence of concealing their marriage, perhaps drew upon her that judgment of providence, which destroyed her husband, and rendered her miserable. I think the stile very indifferent, and in some places, mean and absurd. One or two of the heroes, I think, says *'death*, which is not a word in the English dictionary.

Adieu, my dear pet! May you never have Elfrida's fate! though I would rather you had that than Semele's.

I met yesterday with Bolingbroke's letters upon the method and use of reading history, &c. I have gone through but the two first letters. I like them extremely, but dare not say they are sensible and clever; because I have several times spoke

* She was mistress to Jupiter. She obtained a request from him that he would shew himself to her in all the glory of his deity: but the rays of his Divinity, like lightning, struck her dead.

and wrote to you upon this subject, and have often inculcated that we misapply our study-leisure extremely, who read for mere amusement, or even theory contemplation. Such persons may be said to study, as the college-lad expressed himself, by an happy blunder, "I read six hours a day, and no one is the wiser."

I think such a man may as well be asleep; for he can only be said to have pleasant dreams; who reads any thing, but with a view of improving his morals, or regulating his conduct. I mean men, who are happy enough to be under no necessity of reading, but for themselves; for arts and sciences must be studied by some people for the useful purposes of life. Adieu!

HENRY.

H I A T U S.

LETTER CCLIII.

My dear FANNY,

I DRANK hard at —, and it is now too late to reach home: however, I might get as far as —, with ease; but have stopped short here that I might be at liberty to think of, and write to you, more agreeable to me than any company or converse, I can meet with in this world, while my back is turned to you.

I received a very pretty letter from you last post, a very generous and a kind one too. The fatal necessity of my too-long absence from you is sufficiently irksome in itself; and the sensible light in which you apprehend it, and the rational manner you speak of it in, saves me that additional weight of anxiety, which would be intolerable. You can
always

always command sense and reason enough, when you are mistress of yourself; and, in obedience to them, let me be proud to own myself your vassal too.

The comments, I expect from you, upon those writings, and others of the same class, which I have recommended to you, are best shewn in your life, by chearfulness and content; the first manifested in philosophy, and the latter in resignation. Whenever I sit down to read any writings of this kind, I first suppose myself, in order to try their power, labouring under all the ills of sickness, sorrow, poverty, and oppression: when in a short time, all these gloomy cares are dispelled, like mists before the enlivening sun-beams; and I look back first, with triumph, and contempt upon those fleeting shadows, which are now passing so far behind me; and then look forward with gratitude and joy, to that glorious prospect wide-opening before me. In short, there is but one misfortune in life, which I think could prove too hard for such reflections as these to support me through; I mean the loss of thee, of thee, my only gain: and I am very certain, that nothing could prevent me from following you precipitately, but the fear, by that rash action, of losing you for ever.

Among the papers which I design to collect in my *solamen miseris*, I would insert the Hymn to Contentment, and Night-piece on Death, of Parnell's. I happened to read them both this morning, at Kitty's; and, if it would not appear too much vanity, I would add some of my letters to you, where I speak of the providence and mercy of God, and the immortality of the soul; which, as they are my own reflections, might have a better effect on myself, at least, than better writings on the same subjects. A collection of essays, intitled

titled *Spéctacle de la Nature*, occurs to me here, as they give you a general and comprehensive view of natural philosophy; which is such a manifestation of a God infinitely wise, powerful and good, as — away all impious thoughts! — almost renders particular revelation superfluous; at least, to contemplative minds. There are also many passages in these writings, especially two letters from the prior to the chevalier, which are masterly in their kind, that are admirable to abate the self-sufficiency of Man's pride, and to humble all human presumption to a religious and implicit obedience and submission to the infinitely great dispensations of providence; before whose throne let us both kneel, with a pious and virtuous devotion, not with an enthusiastic or fanatic zeal; and from whose grace may we both receive such reward, as shall merit our just and honest inclinations and actions toward each other! So, concluding with *Othello*, Amen, I say, to that sweet prayer!

HENRY.

P. S. J. M. is in this house, offered me his company, and *stranges* much, as the waiter phrases it, why I should chuse to be alone. I am not alone — “Have I not seen her where she has not been?”

HIATUS.

LETTER CCLIV.

My dear FANNY,

YOU cannot imagine with what anxiety I wait for every post, at present, to hear a favourable account of your safe delivery. I own my concern is double, at this time, but double for you alone; and,

and, had I the universe to leave an inheritance, I would rather make hospitals my heirs, than have you forfeit your life, or health, to give me one. "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth," was the original curse. What labour would it have saved your whole sex, if my charming girl had been our first mother!

The delays in the posts, which you complain of, are owing to this: that, for some time past, they have gone later out than usual; so that I had time to write my letters in the morning, and send soon enough: but now, I find, they have recovered their former diligence, which I was not aware of till yesterday morning. I will take care, that you shall meet with no more disappointments.

I have met with a book lately, which I never heard of before, and that pleases me extremely. It is stiled *microcosmography*, or the characters of mankind. It was wrote by bishop Earle, who was some time preceptor to Charles the second. Most of the characters are very well drawn; and the whole is wrote with a good deal of wit, and shews a thorough knowledge of the world, both the speculative and busy parts of it. There are some flat endeavours at point and turn, with several passages unintelligible to a modern reader: but, as the whole is worth perusal, I design it for your library. I shall send it up along with the hams, &c. which I design for Bab's first carnival; and, if it will give me leave to do the honours of the entertainment, I shall certainly be there at your appointed time.

Adieu my *life*! till we meet, I may be said to have taken my leave of *it*.

LETTER CCLV.

IN the first place, How is my sweet love? and well, and how is Bab? and what sort of a Bab is it? Has it a broad, good-humoured countenance, like dad; or a lively eye, double chin, and saucy look, like mam? Is it most a wit, or a philosopher? Does it incline rather to poetry, or metaphysics? Is it compounded of the two heavy elements of earth and water, or the two light ones of air and fire? In short, tell me every thing about it; what it says, and what it does, and whether it has ever yet discovered any ear for music; what sounds affect it most, and whether its eyes sparkle at the gay colours, or its brows knit into contemplation at the grave ones? I am in very chearful spirits upon this happy occasion, and am exerting all my wit to be a very great fool about our sweet infant.

I thank God, with a grateful heart, for your safe delivery; and do unfeignedly think, that, among the many remarkable favours, I have at several times, received from the hands of Providence, or can ever yet receive, you were its best and most valuable gift; for you are not only to me a blessing in yourself, but, like health, give me a relish for all the other goods of fortune, or advantages of life.

Farewel, my heart's only life!

H. E. N. R. Y.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCLVI.

: My dear FANNY, *Kilkenny.*

I AM, at present, employed more agreeably than

I can be otherwise in this town, writing to you, and waiting the arrival of the post to hear from you.

I am obliged to your secretaries, but they must accept my answers to you, for I am at you alone. Kitty gives a promising account our *Julus*: And that he does not suck, surprizes me not; for *our* child could not possibly do any thing like another child. If he was reared entirely by the spoon, perhaps it would not be amiss; that he might imbibe no humours, but what he brought into the world with him; and that he may say, with Richard the Third, "I am myself alone." Our's is so perfect an Englishman, on both sides, that he has refused the Irish teat, because it would not have the brogue on its tongue. If he is to be stiled Pliny, let it be the younger; for I would rather have him endowed with that goodness and benevolence of heart, which was his characteristic, than all the learning and philosophy of the uncle.

I have been shifting all I can to settle my affairs, so as to make my journey to Clogher, through Dublin, convenient at this time; but, whether I can do that or no, be assured I will see my sweet boy christianized, though I go up in one stage, to return in the next. You shall hear more from me next post on this head. I have sent up a fine ham and a head by a carrier, directed to my brother.

I am so charmed at the proper, becoming sense and reasonableness of your not pressing me to go up before,

before, nor calling upon me since, on the just assurance that my own inclinations would induce me to it as soon as possible, that I am therefore resolved to go *coute qui coute*, though I had not determined on it before.

Adieu, my heart's delight, and my mind's comfort!

HENRY.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R. CCLVII.

OUR poor infant still continues very ill; suffers great pain, and his mouth is so swelled and inflamed, that he equally refuses food and medicine; so that, in perfect despair how to relieve him, I do nothing but sit by his cradle all day, crying, and praying, and waiting for a crisis, which the doctor gives me hopes of.

While I see him in such anguish I am almost tempted to expostulate with the Almighty, and say with David, "I have sinned, O Lord, but what harm hath he done?" In short, I think there is no way of accounting for the sufferings, natural and incidental to infants, but by believing the doctrine of original sin: and yet this supposition seems intirely repugnant to our finite ideas of the goodness and justice of God; which convinces me that we are utterly incapable of forming any just notion of the divine attributes; or even of conceiving the true nature of them. The divines tell us that this knowledge is kept from us lest we should be able to comprehend the mysterious workings of Providence toward man, which would reduce faith into science, by which one necessary article of salvation would be destroyed; and this life become then.

then a state of perfection, not probation, for "we should be as Gods, knowing good from evil."

But all this seems to be mere scholastick reasoning, and I think it more orthodox in philosophy and religion to suppose that man is endowed with just so much knowledge and perfection as that link, which he occupies in the great chain of beings reaches to: and as to the article of faith, I cannot think any thing essential to salvation which is purely constitutional; for there is as much difference between men's natural disposition to believe, as there is between their strength or other natural powers.

Such subjects as these are far beyond the reach of my capacity, but you, my dear preceptor, have taught me to reason, or rather to ask questions on every subject which occurs to me, and I often find a kind of pleasure in being ignorant, from a certainty of your being capable and kind enough to inform me: in short, I carry my fondness for your instructions so far, that I am sometimes sorry I had learned to read, or had any taste for books before we were acquainted, for every pleasure or advantage I receive from you doubles its value, from that consideration; and were your circumstances of fortune easy, I should rejoice in not having brought you any dower, for had I one I should be jealous of it, and lose the satisfaction which I now enjoy, of deriving every blessing, good and happiness from God and you alone! oh my dearest Harry, how tenderly, how fondly must I love you, when the being overwhelmed with obligations, beyond the possibility of return, can give pleasure to a heart so proud as mine!

FRANCES.

P. S. I will

P. S. I will not delay the christening till you arrive, if the child does not mend, I wish you would pronounce its name. I am still weak and lame.

LETTER CCLVIII.

I WAITED in vain last post at Kilkenny, for a letter from one of your Secretaries. Now may Kitty's days be ever nights; and in those nights, when she stretches forth her arms for joy, may she be disappointed, as I was, when the post came in! Let her, like me, be "mad with the idea, and grasp the wind!"

I have not half done my prayer, but have stopped short, hoping this post, which I have just sent to, may make me some amends for the disappointment of the last.

The post is just come in, and has answered my wish of a letter from yourself: But I am extremely alarmed at the unfavourable account you give of yourself and Bab; and this very unnatural weather happens unlucky for you both.

I answered you already about Bab's name, which I shall leave entirely to you. I hope your next letter will contain a better account of yourself, and poor little *ourself*, than your former. I would not have the Christening delayed on my account; and I am sure I need not give your sense and prudence a caution to have it as private as possible, that both the expence, and report of it, may be as small as can be. The ease and happiness of our *three* lives depends upon a proper discretion about these two articles. Your happiness depends upon my welfare; my welfare upon your conduct; and *our little self*

Self rests upon both. Now as you are the first moving principle in this chain of causes and effects, I am perfectly easy, though the consequences are so choice and estimable.

Adieu, my Love!

HENRY.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCLIX.

I DECLARE myself a convert to Fitz-osborne's opinion, and "no longer doubt of the salutary effects, which are said to have been produced by words." I am become a recent instance of their power; for my dear Harry's kind letter has wrought a greater change in my health and spirits, than could have been effected in the time by the whole *materia medica*. In the name of our dear little Bab, I return his duty and thanks for the kindness you express towards him. I hope he will live to make his being mine, his smallest merit to your tenderness. Though I receive a very exquisite pleasure from seeing him, I cannot help grudging it to myself, (as I should any other, unshared by thee) and wishing he were placed within your view, though I should, by that means, be debarred of the only joy I am capable of tasting in your absence. Any increase of my fondness for your dear little epitome must be superfluous; and indeed I know nothing that could add to it, but seeing him become as much the object of your tenderness, as he is of mine. I flatter myself with thinking the happy time will come, when it shall be doubtful which of us loves him best.

AA

As I am still very weak, and have not made the least progress in recovering my appetite, I should be very glad to get into the air for a little time: but I wait your orders to dispose of myself in the country, or wherever else you please. All places are alike to me: I must live somewhere; and I think my having a lodging out of town for a few weeks, could make but a small difference in my expenses.—But let this be, or not, as you think best.

Adieu, thou dear dispenser of my present happiness, and only wished addition to my hopes of future bliss!

FRANCES.

LETTER CCLX.

My dear FANNY,

Belmont.

I WRITE this from my new farm, which might stile the Paraclete; for there are “white walls and silver springs” enough to entitle it to that appellation; though there are better reasons for it. So romantic a place never was, if wildness, solitariness, with the print of Astræa’s last footsteps in the situation, and love and constancy in the proprietor, be the distinguishing marks of that character.

There is something amuses and pleases me extremely in this chain of thought; that providence seems to have marked out this spot of earth for yours, by a train of unforeseen accidents. I had taken the land at a time when you and I were upon such terms, that it was highly probable we should never be again reconciled. You had good reasons to be highly picqued at my behaviour; and your prudence, your pride, and honour, was
a just

a just bar to a re-union. At that time, perhaps, all libertine as I was, with many schemes in imagination, and many views in prospect, I might have had some consolation in the loss of a woman, whom my passion loved, and my reason esteemed, in the thought of being, in some sort, eased from that restraint, which my regard to your worth, with my natural sentiments of generosity and honour, never yet (thank God!) extinguished in me, must have laid me under — at such a time, I say, we met by chance : when speaking of this extraordinary, bold, and enterprizing purchase of mine, engaging for a thousand acres of land, at a desperate rent, at a hazardous crisis, and in a dangerous country, which required a large fund to improve, when I was above two thousand pounds in debt, and had neither money, credit, nor stock to apply ; upon describing the situation of the place, you desired I would name it Belmont ; adding, that it was probably the only compliment, you might ever desire from me. Some time after this, you and I projected a plan of Paraclete ; which I have, this day, by an accidental turn of thought, adapted to this place. You may remember, last winter, that, &c.* * * * *

* * and, when I was to look out for a nurse, and accommodation for your sweet ante-loved babe, I was, from some prior reasons, directed to this particular place, for both.

Let me indulge myself farther in the contemplation of this scheme of providence, with regard to you and me. You chose and approved of me, when you had before you, as Milton says,

“ The world to chuse, and providence your
“ guide.”

Sense, wit, and reading were, from my earliest years, the objects of my implicit adoration : and, whenever I changed my passion, it was in search of a fit subject for my admiration. I, at length, possessed, unknowing, these rare qualities in you, and was in danger, “ like the base Indian, to throw “ a pearl away, richer than all my tribe :” But, as my reason improved by your charming converse more than my own reflection, I found acknowledged, and incased the gem, thou “ one “ entire and perfect Chrysolite !” and hope never to exchange thee, but for a better world than this, made more eminently so, by a nobler and higher converse there with thee, thou amiable cherubim and seraphim in one ! in whom are so perfectly joined their two distinguishing characteristics, love and knowledge ! the pleasing hope of which enjoyment above will be a stronger incitement to my virtue here below. In short, I do not know two persons alive, who seem more adapted by nature for each other. Excuse this vanity in me, when your approbation has already made my panegyric. My calmness and philosophy is fit to temper the misfortunes and disappointments of life ; and your wit and spirit proper to season and enliven the ease or pleasures of it ;

“ Dull, tasteless all, if unenjoyed by thee !”

Farewell, thou best subject of my best comments !

HENRY.

LETTER CCLXI.

INDEED, my Harry, I wish to live for no other reason, but to make you amends for all your goodness to me : God grant my power may
be

be in any proportion equal to my will, and we shall be the happiest couple breathing : and, indeed, I think I may, without vanity, say, I know no two persons, who seem better qualified for such a state, than we are ; and therefore we must be thoroughly miserable, if we are not entirely happy ; for both our feelings and sentiments are too delicate and refined, to be capable of that indifference, which the generality of mortals pass their lives in. For which reason, I am not displeased that your situation and circumstances prevented our living together, before I was thoroughly acquainted with you, or myself ; but, though I think I might now safely answer for my future conduct, I own my most fervent wishes are sometimes damped with fearing, that if ever we should live together, you may grow weary of me, or, as Milton phrases it,

“ Too much converse thee perhaps may satiate.”

However, I more often lament the sad necessity which parts us ; and I think you more to be pitied in this separation, even than I am, supposing our love to be quite equal. I have the pains of absence to combat with, which are perhaps as much as I can bear : you have these also, joined to the reflection of having attached yourself to me, for no other reason, but the hope of finding a sincere tender friend, and an agreeable companion : you have made it my duty, as well as inclination, to become the sole partner, and chief solace of your every care, to smooth the rugged path of life, and make the up-hill, as well as the descent, less painful ; nay, even your common affairs and oeconomy are so situated, that you really want a reasonable woman and a faithful friend, in whom you might confide. Will you not think me vain, if I say you are deprived of such a person by our separation ? When I consider the opportunities I lose of en-

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dearing

dearing myself to you by numberless nameless acts of love and gratitude, I lament each passing moment, and regret my fleeting youth, for, oh! I want unnumbered ages, beyond the common date of man, to prove my fond, faithful, grateful soul to thee: Oh! never may the veil of passion cloud it more.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCLXII.

NOT one word from my Pet these two posts! Perhaps you did not get my letters regularly, while I was on my route; for I did not know the course of the posts, as well as I do at home. You see how ready I am to make an excuse for you; and attribute your omission to any thing, rather than vex myself with vain fears of your sickness or neglect; but, in such a case, I know that my dear Heautontimorumenos would immediately conclude me indifferent to her, or dead to myself:—and indeed you may as well suppose me one, as the other.

But this is nothing to the principal business of this letter; which is to desire tea exactly at seven o'clock, on Tuesday evening.

“None enter may, but Love; and he

“Shall guard the door, and keep the key.”

As, I dare say, my Life thinks this account entertainment enough for this post, I shall husband what little wit, or sense, I have, for another occasion, and conclude myself,

My dear Girl,

Your's eternally,

HENRY.

L E T T E R CCLXIII:

Dear FANNY,

Dengan.

I ARRIVED here last night, much fatigued by the warmth of the weather. I hope my Pet is well, and my Pet's Pet. My blessing to the little fellow.

I perceived my heart growing warm at the approach to a place, where I had, twenty years ago, spent so many chearful, boyish days, somewhat like the emotion we feel upon meeting an old school-fellow; whether it be one we have a particular attachment to, or no; for I am not speaking here of a rational affection, but such a prejudice and partiality, as is contracted from early habit and custom, before we have the free exercise of our understandings. The love of our country may be ranked under this head; by which, I do not mean that patriotism, which is but universal benevolence, *poorly* bounded by a province or kingdom; but that *superstitious* attachment. men have even to the very soil, they were born in. I fancy that departed spirits, even in bliss, look sometimes back upon this world with a regard like this, though without any desire of exchanging situations. I speak this upon a presumption that we carry our consciousness with us to the next world, which I look upon to be a thing so far from requiring proof, that to assert the contrary is arguing God to be partial or unjust. Should you be rendered a blessed spirit for your virtues, or I an unhappy one for my vices, you might indeed be said to be happy, and I miserable; but neither of us could be said to be rewarded or punished, without a consciousness of our being the persons, who, in the other life, had merited or incurred these judgments. It is consciousness, which

makes the identity of a person, relative to himself; and, if death destroys this, it in effect creates another spirit in our stead; and to reward or punish such a one for our actions here, would be partiality or injustice. I should be ashamed to insist upon an argument, which, by appearing so obvious to me, makes me conclude has been often urged before; but, as I really never met with any thing on this head, at least, deducted from this reasoning, and that it is a subject you know I am fond of, I should carry it a good deal farther, if I were writing to any one else; but your apprehension saves me that trouble, as it has often done before. Adieu!

A letter is wanting here.

L E T T E R CCLXIV.

I DID not receive my dear Harry's first letter 'till Saturday evening. I was then at the Rock, and had no possible means of sending an answer to the Post-office; therefore was obliged, for the first time, to disobey your commands.

In answer to your inquiry after mine and my Pet's health, I must tell you, you have been very near losing both, since you left us. I attribute my illness to the irregular way we lived in, the four last days you were in town. I was seized on Monday night with all the symptoms of a violent fever: I raved incessantly, and did not recover my senses 'till Tuesday. Polly sent an express to town, but no one came near us 'till Wednesday. I went thro' all the necessary operations, and am now, thank God, very well. I came to town yesterday, and shall return no more. Poor little Bab has had two convul-

convulsion fits ; the last was very near carrying him off. They did not let me know of his illness, 'till I came to town. He is vastly altered ; but I hope, and believe, he will recover. You may judge (by your own) the anxiety I feel for him.

I am vastly delighted with your sentiments in regard to our future consciousness, as they are, in my mind, highly conformable to reason and religion : but I am still more charmed with them, as they corroborate my darling hope, that we shall see, know, and converse with each other in a future state. For certainly, if we retain a consciousness of the affections and actions of this life, we shall likewise retain the idea of those persons, who were the cause of those actions, for which we are to be punished or rewarded. The only thing, I ever heard objected to this opinion, is, that such remembrances might lessen the happiness of those blessed spirits, who may, in this life, be connected by natural or acquired ties to persons, who are to make up the number of the unhappy, in the next. To this I answer, from my own belief and hope, that no soul will be doomed to everlasting damnation : or if there should be such unhappy beings, the heinousness of those crimes, which deserve everlasting misery, would entirely erase the affection or regard we bore them, unknowing of their guilt ; and make us readily acknowledge, when purged from gross and selfish passions, that their doom is just. I cannot think, that, even in this life, there ever did, or will subsist, a real friendship, or sincere affection between the good and bad. Virtue alone is the sure basis, that can make those unions firm and lasting. Without that only true foundation, like Estcourt's guests,

“ They part in time—

“ Whoever hears this my instructive song—

“ For, tho’ such friendships may be dear,
 “ They ne’er continue long.”

I have not wrote these lines right, but ’tis no great matter: I have only altered the form, the sense remains.

The compliment, you pay to my understanding, is more justly due to you, than me. If I am sensible, or intelligent, it is you have made me so. The fond desire of gaining your approbation first roused me to exert the little powers, which nature lent me. Your converse, your letters have improved my mind, and given my thoughts a turn superior to the trifles, which employ the generality of my sex. Yet still I plead no merit from this boast, for such a preceptor must have improved the dullest pupil. It is you, my charming guide, who have made me, as far as I am either, wise or good. You have illustrated your theory by practice, and, by your dear example, shewn me what it is to be a christian and philosopher. Go on then, my loved master; continue to instruct, and (I hope) improve me, ’till I arrive as near thy own perfection, as my small powers admit. Yet still remember I am a woman, nay a weak one too; subject to all the failings of my sex, which require time, as well as reason, to conquer.

Adieu !

FRANCES.

LETTER CCLXV.

Callidon, August 10, 1752.

THIS is a very sweet, romantic situation; the house old and bad. The boy and girl are really very fine children, and capable of any education, solid or polite. Lady O— is a very sensible,

sible, chearful, and agreeable woman; and such a person, as any man might be both pleased and proud to have belong to him, in any situation, or relation of life. Her affability and unaffected manners, not less than her food, which is little more than bread and pulse, milk and water, would besit a cabin; while her taste, spirit, and politeness might become a palace.

I feel a very singular kind of affection for her, which I never was sensible of before for a new acquaintance; it is such a regard, as we have for an old friend. I think, I could speak as freely to her, and intrust her with any secret of consequence to me, as I could to a person, whose confidence I had proved for twenty years.

* * * * *

Adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CCLXVI.

Dear HARRY,

I HAD the pleasure of your's from Hermitage, and am highly delighted with your account of lady O——, and her babes. I have long been certain, that, whenever you knew, you would love and esteem her; and this belief was, I think, the highest compliment, I ever paid her. Has she not abundance of that cleverness, which is not to be defined; which, to the common actions of life, is like grace to beauty? And, as the latter does not arise from any particular complexion, limb or feature, but is the joint result of all; so neither

can the former be said to depend on sense or virtue, tho' I am morally certain it cannot exist without both : for, as we have seen many handsome people, who wanted the charming *Je ne sçai quoi* ; so we must have met with many good and sensible folk, who had not one grain of cleverness about them.

I am heartily concerned at the account, you give of your affairs. It is really a melancholy thing, that you have no person about you, whom you can depend upon ; for those, whose integrity is past dispute, for want of a little *cleverness*, may injure you as highly, as others could by defrauding you. May I live to see the day, when you shall have made me as capable, as I am willing and faithful, to become my dear Harry's only steward !

Our dear little baby is still very far from well. Baxter saw him yesterday : he has ordered him to live entirely on chicken-broth and sack-whey. I am sorry to find his constitution so extremely delicate. I grieve over again for every grief, I felt and indulged, while he was immediately a part of me ; but I hope he will get the better of every thing, and never have reason to sigh, as much as he does now from constitution.

I am to sit, for the first time, to Hussey, on Saturday : he has been engaged every day since I came to town. I repent of my folly already, but do not know how to get off : indeed I think it a very great one, to have *my* picture drawn, especially as you cannot take it with you—But it is too late to help it now, and I must go on with the farce.

As your affairs are in such an irregular way, I suppose you will not stay long at Hermitage. Let me know when you intend coming to town. I wish I were to change my lodgings every time you leave me ! for I can neither sleep or wake, without having your idea continually before me ; nor can I sit or walk in any part of the house, without recol-
lecting

lecting that you sat or walked there, at such or such a time. As this local memory is but a kind of interruption to the constant remembrance I have always of you, independant of time or place, I am sometimes tempted to take up my abode in the kitchen, where (to the best of my knowledge) you never were, that I may be free to think of you, without regard to particular circumstances, or material objects.

I have, with great care and attention, read about half of * Brown; but I must give him a second reading, before I pretend to deliver my opinion, or communicate my remarks.

Your brother and sister are come to dine with me. I cannot say they interrupt me, as I have nothing farther to add, but that I am, and ever will be, your's.

* FRANCES.

* On the Characteristic.

L E T T E R CCLXVII.

Dear FANNY,

Cligher.

HERE am I at the † Bishop's house, quite alone, and shall be so 'till Monday next; when the family return from Enniskillen. I met some of the servants of this house about six miles off, and they acquainted me with the state of matters here; which would have been hint enough for any reasonable man to turn back upon; but, you know, it was rather a matter for me to rejoice at, that I should have so much time to myself, my books, papers, and music. The servants, who are left behind, are the higher sort; and, as we are unfortunately old acquaintance, they fall foul on me,

† Doctor Clayton.

I g:

from

from mistaken kindness, at an unmerciful rate. The butler was immediately for sending to the parson of the parish, "to notify the arrival of a relation and friend of the Bishop's, who was in such a *lonesome* way, that it would pity one's heart to see it." But, upon inquiry, I found this man would not go away, when I bid him, nor take a denial, if he asked me to go home with him; and, not being at the top of his preferment in this diocese, I begged to be excused from the overabounding of his civility. My friend, the butler, then apprehending that I thought the parson too grave and wise for me, (for he could not get it into his head, that a man should chuse to be alone) recommended the Bishop's agent to me; who, he said, would much delight me, as he was a brave, jolly batchelor, like myself, and could crack a bottle and a joke with any man. I asked him, whether this man would give me any of my Lord's money, without his leave? and, being answered No, I said I desired no acquaintance with him.

Lady O—— and I had a good deal of conversation about you, the day before I came away. She spoke very handsomely of you, and kindly too. She said also, that you had but a slight constitution, and was subject to low spirits often; which she attributed to irregularity of hours, late at night and morning, and recommended to me to take some care about that matter for you. She assured me, that she was herself so sensible of the good effect of rising early, that, as she has naturally a great flow of spirits, which were first owing to early hours, she is now obliged to lie in bed, some time longer than she is inclined, lest she should run wild about the country, to the utter scandal and astonishment of all her neighbours.

Adieu!

L E T T E R CCLXVIII.

I Congratulate my dear Harry on the unexpected indulgence, which his taste for retirement has met with. I am not at all surprized that you neither returned to hermitage, nor accepted the company that has been offered you at Clogher; for I am well aware how pleasant it must be to a mind like your's, to be allowed the free exercise of its own faculties. I have often looked with great pity, not intirely unmixed with contempt, on very good kind of people, for seeming to be utter strangers to the pleasures of *self-society*; for I will not call it solitude to be sometimes alone. However, I hope your contemplative amusements are, by this time, heightened into the joys of a rational converse, by the Bishop's return. I am sure he is a sensible man, from the friendship that has so long subsisted between you, and the manner you always speak of him in.

I am much obliged to dear Lady O—— for the expressions, as well as proofs of regard, she has honoured me with. There is really something extraordinary in her attachment, for indeed I cannot plead the least merit to her friendship; yet I hope, and believe, I shall ever retain it; for I am well convinced, I must be highly to blame, whenever I forfeit it.

I am very certain, that you and she are quite right with regard to early hours: but I would not disgrace the goodness of her heart, as well as understanding, to suppose her chearful spirits arise merely from constitution. Believe me, that, in order to support them, she has had recourse to religion and philosophy: nor has her high station exempted her from wanting their aid. May both you and she ever retain that sensible chearfulness,

which so well becomes ye ! which, though you modestly ascribe to regularity and early hours, has its effect from another cause, a consciousness of acting right, and a mind filled with “ that sweet “ peace which goodness bosoms ever.”

I will not however pretend to deny, that, in such constitutions as mine, irregularity may weaken the faculties of the mind, as well as the body, and diffuse a lassitude and heaviness over both ; Providence having ordained, for their mutual preservation, that what injures the one, shall immediately, or remotely affect the other. This sentiment may be carried a great way, even to the mental vices of envy, avarice, &c. and every person, who has ever felt sickness or pain, must know, “ we are not “ ourselves, when nature, being oppressed, commands the mind to suffer with the body.”

Adieu !

FRANCES.

LETTER CCLXIX.

My dear FANNY,

ALL alone still, in my own kingdom ; where, though I have no very extensive sway, I have those subjects to govern, that should be the first essay of a monarch's politics, namely, my own passions and foibles.* I might have answered your letter last post, but declined it ; as I had not time to do it *justice*, to speak still in the kingly stile.

I am extremely pleased, when you answer my letters properly, by entering into the spirit and subject of them, which indeed you can do so well ; not with “ I received yours, and for answer say.”

* Si vis omnia tibi subjici, teipsum subjice rationi.

SEN.

A cor-

A correspondence should be properly a conversation; not mere question and answer. I often just hint at subjects, and leave them imperfect, to give you occasion to complete them; and I am vexed and disappointed, when you neglect it, out of laziness or diffidence; for it must be owing to either of these, whenever I am disappointed. You have sometimes told me, that I over-awe you, from an apprehension of my superior understanding; so that, in writing or speaking to me, you have not always the full exercise of your own powers. Now, for argument's sake, we will let this pass; but then believe me, Fanny, if I remember right, I had not so refined and speculative sense, as you have now, when I was at your age. All the improvement, I have ever made to it, has been almost since that time; and a practised wrestler may be able to overcome an inexperienced man of greater natural abilities. You are now in a state and stage of life, proper to improve yourself, and may have this advantage over me, that you can have the help of one, who has lately travelled through the road you are to go; so that I hope, in return, to have your assistance, as your understanding will be at the height, when mine, from the course of nature, will be on the decline. This I should look upon, as a sort of triumph, of the most flattering kind, namely, a conquest over myself; that is, my better part overcoming my worse. Besides, you have the advantage of a chaste and religious education, which will the sooner enable you to reach the only end I have ever proposed from my studies, to make me rather a *better*, than a *wiser* man. Moral philosophy may reform our manners, and subdue our passions; but slowly the one, and with a constant struggle the other; while religion effects the first at once, and the latter with ease, by substituting more charming pleasures in their stead.

This

This is the most romantic place I ever saw : there are not two hundred yards of level ground in the whole country ; for it is composed of an infinite number of green hills, lying so close to each other, that it resembles a codlin pye in a bowl-dish. So that the nurse's story of giants, of old, stepping from one hill to another, round the country, would not appear an improbable tale here. It is much the same way at Hermitage too, and, in general, through all those parts of this country, I have yet seen.

I hope you are reading Brown upon the Characteristics, and writing notes upon it : I am sure you are, because I desired it. I should be glad to have your opinion upon the definition of virtue, given in the last lines of the third section of the second essay, upon the moral obligations of man to virtue. I give you fair play, by telling you that I think this definition false and imperfect ; and only ask you, how it is so. Read the first, second, and third sections carefully, before you give your opinion ; not that you will discover the error from them, but they will help you to judge the better.

This is a severe trial of my dear pupil ; for, I own, when first I read the book, I was fully satisfied with the definition : and, to give you some help in this matter, I agree that he has shewn the imperfection of the other three definitions of virtue ; but yet I say, he has given a more imperfect and dangerous one himself.

Adieu my Life !

HENRY.

LETTER CCLXX.

IN the disagreeable and embarrassed situation I am at present, I know nothing could tempt me to write, but the fear of your thinking I poorly declined the task you have assigned me, without being ingenuous enough to confess myself unequal to it. I had gone through the whole essay on the obligations of man to virtue, before I received your letter; and had remarked the definition you mention, to be as *imperfect* as any of those, he terms *so*: for which reason, I had contented myself with thinking that virtue is not to be defined; and had taken up so much of Dr. Clarke's opinion, as to believe, that though, like the certainty of an Almighty Being, it cannot be reduced to terms, or fully proved and explained by words, yet is it self-evident to every rational creature. Brown says, virtue consists "in the conformity of our affections with the public good, and the voluntary production of the greatest happiness." If, by the public, he means all human kind, he might have explained it by *universal benevolence*; which is so far from excluding the natural or moral ties, that it certainly strengthens them.

"Friends, parents, neighbours first it will embrace,
"Its country next,—and next all human race."

But, if he confines his idea of the public to a particular nation or people, he doubtless makes virtue of a variable and indeterminate nature; and, at once, destroys his own system, and its existence: for, though the love of our country is certainly a very noble and proper principle; yet, as the interests of every nation and people vary, what may be virtuous with regard to the advantages of one, may be highly criminal, by becoming prejudicial to

to another. This therefore, cannot be the true criterion of virtue : its effects must be uniform, independent of time or place. as it is itself the same in the vale of Santone, or the palace of Versailles.

I am still more displeased at the latter part of his definition, “ the voluntary *production* of the “ greatest happiness.” As this may be understood, poorly confining virtue to the particular stations of affluence or power. I cannot think this was the author’s meaning ; yet, as it may be wrested to this point, I think it is dangerously expressed ; for it may tend to discourage the exercise of virtue in those, who have it not in their power to do great or generous actions.

I have now given my dear preceptor the highest proof of my obedience to his commands ; and, as we are told in scripture, that “ obedience is better than sacrifice,” I hope he will accept the will for the deed. Believe me, my dearest life, I have never been so much hurt at the consciousness of my own weakness, as at this moment. I know I have exposed it ; but I know I have an indulgent master, who will forgive and instruct me. From the first of our correspondence, I have ever declined writing, though I was vain enough of my capacity in that way before ; but the perfection of your letters has shewn me my insufficiency in such a glaring light, that I never sit down to answer a letter of yours, without blushing. You say, I am now “ at an age, and in a state of life, to admit “ improvement ” My age is doubtless on your side, but my situation much against you. The quickness of my apprehension, which is, or should be my best help to study, is turned to melancholy prospects, and my attention to any thing I read, continually interrupted, as I never am one moment alone.

I am

I am ashamed to send this letter. I would not let it go, but for fear you should think me lazy. Adieu, Life, Love, adieu !

FRANCES.

LETTER CCLXXI.

My dear pet,

YOU cannot imagine what pleasure your *critique* upon Brown gives me. Your sentiments are extremely clever and just, and would become a greater adept in philosophy, than you are ; but are really surprizing for a young woman upon so abstruse a subject. I am pleased to find, that your remarks have taken a different turn from mine, though we both agree in the same opinion ; and am glad I did not see your's, before I wrote my own, lest I should have rested there, and thought that no farther criticism was necessary upon the subject.

Indeed, my dear, I intreat you to exert your talents a little oftener in this way ; for you may be assured, that, if I did not think you equal to the task, I would not recommend it to you. Your short and impartial character is this : you have a very good natural understanding, a lively fancy, a quick apprehension, and an easy expression. Your judgment is rather delicate than strong, and may be better stiled a refined taste than a logical reason. In short, you need no farther helps from nature ; and all the assistance you want from art, is to be directed to a course of reading, proper to furnish you with subjects fit for your reflection ; and a lettered converse, to exercise your mind, till it attains
that

that health and vigour, which it is originally capable of.

Adieu, my life!

REMARKS upon Brown's definition of VIRTUE, in his Essay upon the CHARACTERISTICS.

“VIRTUE is the voluntary production of the greatest happiness.” See the last line of Section third.

This definition I look upon to be more imperfect, and of a more dangerous tendency, than any of the three precisions he has so ingeniously proved the insufficiency of. According to Mr. Brown's precision, a man may disinherit his children to endow an hospital. All Europe might have been involved in a war, if a certain neighbouring prince had not an heir. But would it therefore have become the confessor to have got the princess with child? this definition gives latitude to a dangerous principle in an old Latin sentence; *cum vitia prosint, peccat qui recte facit*: In short, I think that Mr. Brown, both here, and in his obligations of man to virtue, argues more like a politician than a divine; regarding the end, without respecting the means.

But there are actions which all men agree about to be sins, which the school divinity styles *specifick*, and St. Austin says, *multa prohibita sunt quia mala, i. e. in se, mala*. The scripture forbids us to do evil, even though good should come of it: now if the production of happiness constitutes the nature of virtue, how can that action be deemed bad, which tends to good? This text then might make one suspect, at least, that there was such a thing as *irrelat ve* vice, that changed not its nature upon becoming a *relative* virtue. I think it a dangerous opinion,

opinion, that virtue is not a *reality*, but a *name*: I am persuaded that we have an original idea of moral truth and beauty, transfused into the soul by our Great Creator; which to distinguish from the natural perceptions we have of harmony in music, or proportion in matter, may be stiled by the name of conscience. It is a sensation we are affected with, previous to all reasoning with regard to our own happiness, or that of others. It is an impression originally framed in our minds, which like the appetites of the body, we feel ourselves moved by, without regard to the ends for which they were ordained. In truth, the first is a divine impulse, as the latter is a natural motive, but neither of them a philosophic deduction.

All men, it is said, are not sensible of this moral perception in themselves; let us say then, that those who are blest with it, are affected not by what Shaftsbury stiles *taste*, but by what the divines better term *grace*.

I am sure that Mr. Brown does not mean to say, that there is not really such a thing as abstract virtue, tho' he would unkindly destroy that pleasing opinion, so flattering to the dignity of human nature, and so inducive to its ethicks, that we have an original sense of it.

If then there is such a thing as abstract virtue in the great exemplar, is it not more agreeable to our notions of the divine wisdom and goodness, that he should imbue our souls with a natural tincture of this charming idea, than that he should leave it to be groped out through the puzzled labyrinths of human reason, or hazard its foundation upon the various and contradictory systems of bungling politicians?

I agree indeed, that reflection may be necessary to direct its operation, but not to create its nature; and that reasoning may form *relative*, but not

not *absolute* virtue ; as arithmetick may multiply or divide figures, but can neither make or alter the nature of number.

If it be objected that I have given no explicit definition of virtue, as the calling it an idea is no precision, I answer, that as it is of the essence of God, no terms can adequately express it : It is a certain *afflatus divinus*, or inward working of the spirit, which we may feel, without being able to describe ; for it is, as I said before, an impulse, not a reflection ; for reason, if left to itself, as in some instances given above, with regard to the greater publick good, would often betray us into vice or mistake, if we had not a certain consciousness, or original idea to guide ourselves by.

Brown tells us, that virtue is the *voluntary production of the greatest happiness*, but when we ask him what shall direct us to that amiable end, he is silent : Then Clark tells us, that reason must be our guide ; when I enquire what is reason ? Woolaston cries truth ; and when I ask for a definition of truth, Shaftsbury refers me to idea ; which idea I attribute to a superior spirit, or emanation of the divine light or grace, which impresses a conviction upon our consciences, of certain moral truths and obligations which are previous to, and independent on human reason or reflection, and therefore permanent, and fixed in their own nature.

Now I do not mean, by any thing I have said, either to supersede the use of reason to guide our actions, or the necessity of revelation to influence them : but thus I argue, that if the exercise of moral virtue be our highest and purest pleasure here, and that this pleasure proceeds not from the great and glorious idea of absolute, specifick, *irrelative* excellence, but merely from a regard to publick or private happiness, here or hereafter ;
what

what enjoyment can we have in this contemplation, which we must suppose to be the bliss of angels, when the opportunity of exercising this virtue, and its relation to all happiness shall be finally at an end? The joys of the next world we are to suppose, consist in the intuition of the divine presence, in the contemplation of absolute beauty, harmony and truth, abstract and *irrelative*: In this world then, we are, not only to purchase the reward, but to prepare ourselves for the enjoyment of it; and without such an original *irrelative* sense, we should be unblest in any heaven but a Mahometan one.

“ Aristotle says, that virtue hath no reason, by which he means that it is indeed prior to all reason; yet it may be said to have it, because it hearkens to it, and is, in respect of the reasonable part, as a son is in respect of his father, who is governed by his instructions.”* M. Paschal, seems to be at a loss for a certain definition of virtue: he says the port is a guide for mariners, but what shall direct us to the haven of virtue? upon which M. Voltaire, whom I take to be both a superficial writer, and a slight philosopher, answers him, *extempore*, “ Do as you would be done by.” According to which rule, you should rescue a thief from the gallows, because you would be glad that any one should do the same for you, in like circumstances. Here Paschal seems rather to be in search of the *example* than the *rule*, for though the haven is the end your voyage aims at, yet it is not that which directs your course: but he has unawares made a very apt allusion to the proper state of this question, for virtue, like the loadstone, is a power in the hands of our Creator, as yet inexplicable by human reason.

* Gassendi.

Here a letter is missing.

LETTER CCLXXII.

AS my dear Harry knows the uneasiness which his silence gives me, I cannot help saying it is more than unkind, it is absolutely cruel, to neglect writing. There was a report last week, that you died suddenly. I heard it last Friday; and my not receiving a letter from you that day, almost distracted me. Though your letters are the most sensible and elegant pleasure I can receive in your absence, yet is my affection so much stronger than my understanding, that I would willingly give up the entertainment they afford me, to be certain of a single line by every post, which should barely tell me you are well. I know it is a weakness to expect such punctuality; but it is the natural effect of a *greater*, the having so entirely given up my heart, as to render my happiness wholly dependent on another; a trust, for which (contrary to the general opinion) you can, with ease, give me sufficient security.

I received your two letters of the former posts; and think it is really something extraordinary, that a person, who was bred and has lived like you, should, at your time of life, immersed in business, and involved in disagreeable circumstances, without any outward call, or visible help, become so great a proficient in the science, which to the generality of the world appears so tedious and abstruse, as to deter them from being at all acquainted with it; and in which many learned (and from thence called wise) men have passed their lives, without either making themselves, or the world, one whit the better for it. In short, I look upon it as a particular mark of the Almighty's goodness, that

that has been pleased to give you a turn of mind, which must render you superior to the common accidents of life ; and that he has thought proper to make you an instance, among the few, that neither riches, power, nor honours are necessary to constitute the real happiness of a rational being ; since, with a taste and relish for them all, yet unpossessing any of them, your state is infinitely preferable to those, who, in the full enjoyment of them all, are unblest with true religion and philosophy.

May my sweet love long taste those blessings which virtue can alone bestow ! and may it, both in this world and the next, be to him an addition of his bliss, that he has made me better, wiser, and, of course, happier !

Adieu, my heart's, my soul's dear Harry !

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCLXXIII.

YOU tell me that your picture is improved into your own likeness at last ; then take it home immediately, lest the painter should attempt to cheat me with a Helen of Guido's.

Poetry and painting, they say, are sister arts ; but Hussy has so raised my jealousy by his success, that I shall endeavour to make them rivals too.

Character of FANNY.

With all of wit that nature can bestow,
And more of sense, than ev'n her sense can know ;
Her heart a mine, by modesty conceal'd,
Untaught to glow, till love the gem reveal'd :
With

With tenderness, and converse sweet, to prove
 At once the joys and calm delights of love :
 Her fancy lively, and her judgment true ;
 Perfect in nature, and in morals too :
 Her air coquettish, but her mind a prude ;
 Her body wanton, but her soul not lewd :
 Rivals by turns, her mind and person charms,
 Allays the lover, and the husband warms :
 Who pleas'd at first, and yet at last pleas'd more ;
 My future hope, and yet my present store.
 These are thy worth ; not dow'r told down in gold,
 Too dearly purchas'd for thy merit sold.
 Thy virtues, not my art, these numbers frame,
 Oh ! more my inspiration than my theme ! *

HENRY.

* Tantus eras vates, tanta est Lucretia. An ipsum
 Hoc ille dederas : an dedit illa tibi ?

FRAG. EPIG. JUL. SCAL.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCLXXIV.

My dear FANNY,

YOU desired to hear from me on Friday ; but
 those, who love, are fond of works of supererogation.

I am reading one of the books I brought away
 from you, intitled *Manners*, and am well pleased
 with it. I remember the reason of my throwing it
 aside, when I bought it for you, was, upon looking
 a little into it, I observed the author had alluded
 to a great number of private characters, to illustrate
 general theorems ; and as I had sometimes met
 with many insipid moral novels of that kind,
 I conceived a prejudice against the book : but I
 find from this author, that when such a manner
 is

is managed with wit and address, it gives a certain vivacity to this kind of writing, and strengthens the style, by adding action to reason.

What incited my inclination to read this book, was a paragraph in the public papers, that it had given great offence in France, where it was written, and that there was likely to be a prosecution against the author; and, as far as I have gone, I find it has a merit in it very apt to give offence to priests and bigots. The writer is, I think, a man of sense, learning, parts, and unprejudiced reflection. I am, therefore, highly pleased to find he is of the same opinion with me, of an innate idea of irrelative virtue; which is a sentiment I am so charmed with, that I am fond of laying hold on every occasion of discoursing about it. So I shall here take a slight at it again.

We have, from the mere bounty of nature, a smell for flavours, a taste for savours, a sight for symmetry, an hearing for sounds, and a feeling for more sensual gratifications. Shall then the goodness, nay the justice of God, leave us void of as immediate a sensation of virtue, which is a thing of so much higher consequence, both to ourselves and others, and both with regard to this life and the next? Shall I say, the bounty of God be greater than his justice? Shall our instinct faculties be governed by a divine impulse, and shall our moral powers be left without a guide? for human reason is insufficient to form the rule, though it's proper province is to be exercised, and conversant about it.

But the senses are only the organs to convey ideas to the mind; it is the soul, which perceives. Brutes then have a soul: they have also a spirit, if you give me leave to make a distinction here; for matter, of itself, is inactive. There are so many instances in brutes of what we partially stile mimic reason, that mankind has no great cause to be vain

upon the sole prerogative of this excellence; since all we can claim is but a higher degree of this boasted superiority.

But we are taught to believe that God formed man after his own image: this favour surely was not shewn in his human figure, which Diogenes humourously ridiculed, by plucking a goose, and leading it through the streets of Athens, crying, "Behold Plato's man!" which that philosopher had defined to be a two-legged animal without feathers*. Nor can this glorious characteristic be presumed from any one quality, which brutes have in any degree or analogy with us. What then is this great distinction, upon which we do, and ought so justly to value ourselves, but a certain, innate, moral sense, which, as the serpent expresses it, "makes us as Gods, knowing good from evil?"

Brutes are capable of virtue, according to the common sense of it; for many of their actions demonstrate love, gratitude, and benevolence: and though, when the spaniel beats the field for our sport or food, he may be considered as acting merely for his own pleasure; this is no more than some moralists have charged upon human virtue, which they have resolved into a self-satisfaction. In short, it is an innate, moral idea, which makes us *sensible* of virtue; while reason and free will only make us *capable* of it.

As soon as I have read this book, I will send it up to you.

Adieu, my fairest Idea!

* Animal bipes, et implume.

LETTER COLXXV.

My dear FANNY,

I WOULD not tell you any thing of the matter, 'till it was over; but I left town with a sore throat, which increased very fast upon me, last night; but I am this morning, thank God, as well as ever, and am just setting out for your own Maidenhall.

I have gone a good way in *manners*; and, upon a farther view of that author, I begin to find the same fault with him, which I did at first. His characters are too frequently introduced, are tedious, and ill drawn, and many of them not at all to the purpose. However, there are here and there, certain traits of genius, which, upon the whole, make the work appear to have been written by two different persons; or rather, I have taken it into my head, that it was wrote by a woman, who had, for some time, conversed freely with sensible men.

The author, authors, or compiler of this book speak very rationally against the doctrine of eternal misery; which is a matter, I think, I have in some of my letters, given my opinion upon; and is a subject I am so fond of, that I shall venture to speak the sentiments, which at present occur to me on that head, without waiting to recollect whether I have said the same things to you before or no, or whether any one else has said them before me.

The doctrine of eternal misery establishes the empire of the devil; for twenty men must be damned, for one that can be saved, upon the orthodox christian scheme; and the mediator has suffered in vain.

Suppose, during the millennium of the just, there should be a millennium of the unjust—don't you think a thousand years sufferings may make sufficient

cient atonement to divine justice? And I think the popish doctrine of purgatory only absurd in the opinion, that any merits of the living can avail the dead there. However, this wild notion may be considered as a *pious fraud* to be of service in religion, as it multiplies our inducements to devotion—As for example; if I thought my dear Fanny was receiving many stripes there for her crosses to me, no Anchorite ever led such an exemplary life, as I should, to rescue my own spoiled Pet.

Infinite justice, they say, requires infinite satisfaction. Perhaps this is only a quibble upon words: but, to take it their own way, has not the mediator's sufferings already given this infinite satisfaction? and must every miserable wretch, who dies in sin, become an additional victim to infinite justice? In short, this shocking doctrine seems rather to be a piece of priest's rage, than divine wrath; and is such a blasphemous opinion of the Godhead, as exceeds almost any of those lay crimes, they anathematize so vehemently and presumptuously at the same time; and are not aware that they reduce God to a kind of fate, while, by extending his justice, they limit his mercy, and so peremptorily destroy the power of free will in the exercise of his attributes. But I cannot let this *infinite* satisfaction pass by so quietly, without shewing that it proves nothing, by proving too much; for infinite satisfaction must be infinite every way, in degree as well as duration; then this destroys the equitable rule of proportionable punishments; for the least crime requires satisfaction, infinite satisfaction, infinite in degree, and infinite in duration—so that a man must be made a God, before he can be rendered capable of giving such *infinite* satisfaction.

I have not done with this subject, and shall resume it in my next; for the post is just going out. Adieu, my own Fanny! Read and write my charming

ing pupil, while I endeavour to reflect that light back again upon you, which you first inspired me with.

LETTER CCLXXVI.

My dear FANNY,

I AM just come home: My uncle is as usual; or, as some man construed Queen Anne's motto, *semper eadem*, worse and worse.

Every thing here in a backward and neglected way—Why do not you come down, and set matters to rights? I hope in God I shall not be long the only slave in your affairs. I have many things to take care of; and there is but one person, I can, or should chuse to confide in, and her help I am deprived of. O my soul, keep steddy to your philosophy! for my old friend Providence will not forsake you.

I have finished *manners*, and still think of that book, as I did in my last; and could point out several passages, to shew that it is rather a collection, than an original work. I do not mean from his general reasoning; which, if right, cannot avoid being the same with others, who, have wrote justly upon the same subject; but what I would instance, are particular turns of thought and expression, which I have met with before. There is one among them taken from Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*: "That it appears more reasonable, the minority, instead of the majority, should determine a question; for ten men think wrong, for one who judges right." The only difference between this whim in the *Lettres Persanes*, and this book, is, that Montesquieu only threw out this sentiment as a stroke of fancy; but our moralist

seems to advance it as a grave argument, and supports it by a text from Exodus, disingenuously quoted. His words are, that the Jewish legislator advises us "not to pass our judgment according to the opinion of the greater number;" which words do certainly support his ridiculous argument: but observe the literal words of the text, and you will see how unfairly he deals with it. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude, *to do evil*; neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to decline after many, *to wrest judgment.*" Exod. xxii. 2.

Adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CCLXXVII.

I HAVE but just time to tell my sweet love that I have spent the greatest part of this day with my dear lady.—She came to town on Sunday night, and sent to me yesterday. Indeed she is a charming woman.

I am sorry for your uncle's disorder, but am afraid he is incurable. I am sure I need not say how earnestly I wish to share and alleviate your every distress and fatigue: but, tho' I am, at present, denied that happiness, I will rely on that Providence, who can, and will, in his good time, remove every obstacle, that prevents my lessening your inquietudes, by taking that share in them, which is immediately my right; and which I would not part with, nor exchange, for any title, that could put me into the possession of power, wealth and honours.

I could say more, much more upon this subject, but hear the tinkling of the post man's bell; therefore must conclude truly and affectionately your's,

FRANCES.

L E T T E R. CCLXXVIII.

Dear FANNY,

I FORGOT to mention to you, in my last, another remarkable passage in our moral Plagiarist; even Pope's much-admired simile of a stone thrown into a standing lake, verbatim, except the rhyme.

But let us have done with him, for he interrupted me last post in the prosecution of my argument upon eternal misery; and how, or how far, I reasoned upon that subject, I do not recollect at present; for I have been deep involved in affairs of this world, since I came home: but I shall proceed as thoughts now occur, without regard to order; as you know I take the liberty with you of making my letters a sort of common-place book.

I am not ignorant that the Scriptures are full of penal threats; but I do not remember that they are denounced to all eternity: nay I think the contrary is implied in a text, which the popish clergy quote for purgatory; "there to remain, 'till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." It is an allusion made to the state of a debtor. I am afraid that even eternal happiness is not fully promised in the Scriptures, which surely is a more reasonable faith than the other; and that this glorious hope is rather a *moral* presumption than a *divine* Revelation.—Our principal arguments upon this head are drawn from the perfect goodness of God, the analogy running through all his works, the natural frame of the human soul, it's frequent satiety of all worldly enjoyments, it's earnest longings after some supreme, elevated, and complete bliss, and a certain natural sympathy, the virtuous and religious mind feels to be again allied to some more excellent nature, which it seems to have, as it were, a sense of being lately separated from. I think it may be rationally in-

ferred from all this, that, to satisfy the natural frame of such a soul, it's bliss must be eternal; for pleasures not made to cloy, can give no satiety. Now extend, rather say *limit*, our heavenly bliss to the millionth power of a millionth myriad of years, which is almost infinitely beyond the art of numbers to enumerate; yet even the immediate bliss of the sublimed spirit would be, from that reflection, rendered imperfect; as, the higher our happiness in possession, the more sensibly are we affected at even the most remote thought of parting with it. And I should prefer my state, even in this vile world, satiated with frail, mortal joys, and oppressed with life-long cares, but presuming upon the great hope of a glorious immortality, to the most sublime pleasures of the next, limited in prospect, even one thought short of eternity. Shall we lose our earnest relish, our virtuous longing after immortality, in a state of certain bliss, which operates so emphatically in our souls, even while the vices of the body, and the corruption of the heart, occasion that thought to be attended with a dread of what eternity we may be doomed to? or may the soul, in perfect bliss, have one desire ungratified? In short, to bring this heart-transporting, metaphysic-inspiring subject as near to demonstration as possible, let me presume to argue thus: if the souls of men are not immortal, God has granted us less happiness, than we are naturally made capable of, which is contrary to our notion of God, "with whom is fulness of joy, and pleasure for evermore."

Thus man has a natural *præ-sentiment* of future bliss, and a rational deduction of it's eternity; but he has neither the one or the other with regard to future misery, or it's eternity. The only dread, which appears to me natural to the mind of man, is that very shocking one of annihilation.

What

What I mean is, that man has not any natural forebodings of future misery, tho' his reason may draw some inference about it: but then this reason can never conclude for eternal punishments. So that this doctrine rests merely upon what revelation is made about it; which as I hinted before, does not denounce them eternal, at least the *misery*.

Nay I think farther, that, tho' rewards may be agreeable to divine justice, punishments are not. If I remember right, I said something upon this subject to you in a * former letter, by alluding to human laws; so shall insist on it no farther here: but, to take away all cavil from this paradox, and to treat the subject more equally, I shall deny that either rewards or punishments, tho' allowed in the moral sense, are agreeable to divine goodness or justice, in the legislative sense.

I would not hazard this subject, so unfinished, to any hands but your's, as I am obliged to break off in a very dangerous crisis; but the night is far spent, and next post shall be employed to extract the poison.

Adieu, thou sole partner of my heart, and only confidante of all it's sentiments!

HENRY.

* Letter CLXXVII.

L E T T E R CCLXXIX.

I DO remember the plagiarism you mention: and indeed it is the only passage I can recollect of the whole book. I beg you'll send it me by the first opportunity.

The remaining part of your letter is upon so very high, and nice a subject, that your saying you have not done with it, is not perhaps, my only reason for not beginning with it. I confess myself

so great a coward, that, tho' I have many doubts with regard to particular points of faith, and scriptural tenets, I chuse to continue in a state of uncertainty, rather than expose those scruples, either to my own, or any other person's reason: tho' nothing pleases me better than meeting with the sentiments of others, upon those matters, which my weak mind is not able to reconcile to itself. For this reason, tho' I make no return to your sentiments on religious, or philosophical subjects, I must beg you will take it for granted, that I am both improv'd, and delighted with them: and, when I cease to be either, I will confess my ignorance, and honestly tell you so.

I have been in a continual hurry since I saw you: I have not had time either to read or write; don't scold, and I'll mend directly.

I hear that Bolingbroke has wrote a treatise in defence of suicide; and revis'd a book of Dr. Middleton's, intitled, *The Inefficacy of Prayer, to an immutable Being*. These we may, I think, from their very titles, apprehend to be works of evil tendency, and such as may do vast mischief in the world; particularly as suicide is the national vice of our gloomy countrymen. But let any one, who reads the treatise, look back on the circumstances of the author's life, and they will, at once, convince us of the insincerity he must have used on this subject; as there have been few persons, who had greater temptations to illustrate such arguments by example. Consider him fallen from the highest grandeur, (except a throne) in one instant deprived of power, wealth, and honours; doom'd to banishment; his foes triumphant; his friends discarded, his character calumniated, and his body suffering under an-irremediable disorder! then tell me what prevented his seeking refuge in the arms of death, if he thought suicide no crime; or did not fear
rushing

rushing into the presence of his judge, in the actual infringement of his laws?

Adieu, thou dear guide, and pattern of my life! from whom I derive my *little* goodness, and *great* happiness. Adieu, my heart's dear Harry!

FRANCES.

Sequel of Letter CCLXXVIII.

LETTER CCLXXX.

I THINK then, with some sensible divines, that *rewards* and *punishments* are not bestowed or inflicted upon our actions, good or bad; but that *happiness* or *misery* is the pre-ordained consequence of virtue or vice; and that, as natural virtue or vice, as temperance and exercise, or intemperance and inactivity, produce health or disease in this world, so moral virtue or vice as essentially are attended with happiness or misery in the next.

Now, if our portions hereafter be *general moral consequences*, and not *particular justiciary adaptations*, I can perceive no reason why the soul of man should be, at any time, precluded from redeeming itself by a thorough contrition, and sincere repentance; or that a halter or a quinsy shall be sufficient to deprive it of bliss, to all eternity: for a spirit, at any period of its existence, reclaimed to a full and perfect sense; love; and adoration of the essence, truth, goodness; and power of God, must *necessarily* attract to itself that happiness, which is *essentially* allied to such a state of mind.

But some severe divines may here object, that a departed spirit can possibly have no *merit* in contrition or repentance, when temptation to sin is no more, and when the consequential misery is demonstratively ascertained, and severely experienced.

But the beginning of this letter may be referred to, where happiness is said to be the *consequence* not the *reward* of virtue. And, as we are taught to believe that higher spirits than our's, have been plunged into the abyss for sin, in the next world; why may we not hope that a poor human soul may be capable of emerging from thence, by righteousness hereafter? for surely religion is not limited, either in place or time, to the narrow bounds and short duration of this paltry globe; but extends itself thro' the whole universe of intelligence, and shall continue to all eternity.

I look upon this life to be a state of trial, and the next to be a state of purgation, from which, perhaps, the most perfect man may not be exempt: for vengeance is not of the essence of God; but his nature is so pure, that no spirit may approach the throne of his Grace, obscured by stain or blemish; and a state of thorough purgation, that is, of sincere repentance, without temptation to sin, is necessary to prepare us for the bliss of angels. So that I look upon the devil's empire to be of this world only, and not extended to the next; for here he may tempt, but there he cannot.

I think, then, that a soul purged from sin, by any method, is a proper object of the divine favour. "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth." Can chastisement then be deemed the effect of hatred, in the Lord, "who hateth nothing, which he has made?" And does not a father cordially love a son, whom he has reclaimed by discipline? Is not the penitence of a sinner accepted of by God, tho' effected by pain, poverty, or other misfortune in this life?

In short, if punishments, or misery, either judiciary or consequential, be eternal, in any one instance, the devil has triumphed so far; which is blasphemy: but, according to the severity of some divines,

divines, there can be but a small minority saved ; which would look like a very poor composition for the Redeemer of mankind to make.

If this doctrine may appear to set men too free from terror, to influence their conduct toward a virtuous life, I shall consider this subject in that light, in another letter ; and do assure you, my dearest Ally, that I am as sincerely attached to you, as if I thought my salvation depended upon it.

Adieu !

HENRY.

L E T T E R CCLXXXI.

SINCE my last letter I have looked into the Bible, and find some passages, where eternal punishments are denounced : but then I find also several other places, where the words *eternal* and *everlasting* are meant in a limited sense, for a long and indefinite time. So that I think these texts do not preclude me from reasoning upon this subject.

I own, the first thing which occurred to me, when I met with expressions in the Scripture, that seemed to shock my reason, and my idea of God, was, to suppose them only threats *in terrorem* ; but then this alarmed me about the consequence, which such a surmise might draw after it, with regard to the promises mentioned in the same Scripture. However, upon recollection, I did not think this inference should logically follow ; for a promise is a contract, the virtuous man a purchaser, and justice exacts the obligation ; but the case is quite different with regard to threats. A Lord may say to his Steward, “ Tend well this farm till my return, and I will make thee an inheritance out of it ; but, if you suffer the soil to be overgrown with briars, I will cause thee to be flayed
“ alive.”

"alive." Now, though the Lord must fulfil his promise out of justice, he surely may forgive the penalty out of mercy.

But I do not mean to insist upon this argument; for, as the texts I hint at may be so interpreted as to agree with the reasoning of my former letters, I should be very tender of charging the least dissingenuousness upon the words of God; and, if they were express and uncontrovertible in this or any other particular, against my sense or opinion, I would, as becomes me, submit my reason to my faith. And indeed, though the distinction I have made between promises and threats, sufficiently proves that justice or reason does not require the completion of denounced vengeance, yet certainly *truth* requires that every thing shall be, as it is affirmed.

In order to help us the better to frame a judgment upon this subject, let us take the matter as high as we can, by beginning at original sin; and yet all the curse, we hear, upon that occasion, seems to be temptation, labour, and death, (Genesis iii. 15. and to the end.) That is, it may be apprehended, that the natural consequence of the first parent's sin was the debasing human nature to a state of frailty, mechanics, and mortality; which imperfect nature was, from thence, derived down to all their race: "For an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit."

Our Redeemer afterwards, at a certain time, (though resolved from the beginning) takes our nature upon him, (and is thence stiled our second Adam) by which benevolent and godlike condescension mankind was retrieved to their former dignity, so far as to be rendered capable of their former perfection, perhaps greater; in which the whole mystery of the incarnation seems to lie, not in the unaccountable doctrine of satisfying the divine justice;

ence; which doctrine has perplexed the faith of many well disposed christians, and, perhaps, has prevented this religion from becoming as universal, as its other evidence, and moral perfection, seem to promise.

That mankind should labour under guilt; for the sin of our parents, and that they should be redeemed by the sacrifice of God; the first not our crime, and the latter not our merit; seems to be a scheme of Providence contrary to sense or religion: but that a race of beings proceeding from Adam, after his fall, should consequentially be of too corrupt a nature to be capable of perfect bliss; and that our Redeemer, becoming our second parent, a man every way, (sin only excepted) should thereby restore that purity to our nature, as may render it capable of perfect happiness, is, in my opinion, a doctrine agreeable to metaphysical philosophy, reconcileable to the nature of things, to the eternal laws of God; and likewise vindicates him from the charge of vengeance or partiality, as the whole consequences seem to proceed from the original formation of things.

From all which reasoning, I shall venture to conclude against eternal punishments: for, in the first instance, at the fall, even temporary ones are not threatened *in futuro*; and, in the second instance, at man's redemption, if they became so then, how many wretched souls would be losers by the bargain! and Christ may be said to have overcome death only, by his sacrifice, but not to have conquered sin.

These few thoughts occurring to me, when I sat down to write, have obliged me to defer my promise in my last, 'till the next post.

Adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CCLXXXII.

My dear FANNY,

Kilkenny.

I AM now retired from the grand jury, to perform a promise I have delayed for some posts, and think an assizes a proper time to discourse about *judgment to come*.

When I first entered upon this subject, I own I trembled, as Felix did, for fear of the consequence of my doctrine; therefore I canvassed the matter a good deal in my own mind, before I ventured to treat upon it even to you; though I was perfectly certain that the notion of eternal misery could not add any thing to the strength of your virtue, though it might, perhaps, take away somewhat of the merit of it. The reasons, then, which suffered me to proceed, were these.

If I argued justly, which I endeavoured to do, I cannot apprehend any ill consequence from my subject. Truth cannot injure truth; and error is not necessary to bring about the ends or designs of Providence.

I do not say that the propitiation of our Saviour was self sufficient to redeem us totally; but that it did not leave us in a worse state under the gospel; than it found us under the law, (which, with regard to the many, it would have done, upon this doctrine;) and only enabled us to work out our own salvation, but I do not think it has limited the time.

I think that the severe divines endeavour to prove too much: for, as there is no proportional justice in eternal misery, men may suspect the whole scheme, from one flaw, to be but a pious fraud to deter from vice; but, when misery is taught to be the *natural consequence* of vice, damnation may appear to be unavoidable, unless the Great, Immu-
table

table Being shall contradict his eternal laws ; which is absurd, and still less to be expected in favour of a sinner.

The terror of eternal torments either drives men to despair, and so does more harm than good ; or is balanced by the hope of mercy in proportion to its fear, and so is destroyed.

A man would certainly, with more prudence, put himself into the power of a provoked enemy, than expose himself naked to an easterly wind ; because, in one case, something might be hoped from generosity and mercy ; but, in the other, he must expect the natural consequence of his indiscretion and folly.

I think the doctrine, as it stands in the orthodoxy, favours too much of human politics ; and the mixing profane with sacred things has often a dangerous tendency.

Some divines argue very unfairly, and uncomfortably too, upon the obligation of man to virtue, by attributing it to hope and fear ; as if rewards and punishments were, like an *alloy*, necessary to make the too refined idea of it permanent, and fit for use. But surely the love of virtue is not hope, nor is the abhorrence of vice, fear ; though these very distinct ideas seem to be confounded by their definition.

I believe that any man, who has observed the least upon the motions of the human mind, has, at several times of his life, perceived a certain impulse to some actions, and a sort of unwillingness to others, though both, in all human appearance, indifferent in themselves ; nay, sometimes these secret intimations have moved us contrary to the most obvious reason about such things ; but in a little time, perhaps the genius of these *intimate* directions has manifested itself in some remarkable event.

event of our lives, unforeseen, and improbable at that time.

Is it reasonable then to suppose that such hints should be afforded us in things merely relative to our lives or fortunes in this world, and that we should be left without some unerring guide or impulse with regard to virtue, upon which our nobler fortunes and immortal lives depend? These inward workings of the spirit, this natural consciousness, this self-evidence, which I have, at several times, supposed in the mind of man, I am well convinced, has, in general, a stronger effect toward the influence of virtue, than all the art of logic, supported by the doctrine of eternal misery. For my part, I have been often guilty of vice, with all the fear and trembling of an orthodox christian; and have, at other times, been capable of virtue, without the least contemplation about hope.

As true religion consists in the perfect love of God*, I do not see how fear is, any way, necessary to piety; except that best and strongest of all fears, which proceeds from extreme love. "There is mercy with thee; therefore shalt thou be feared." And I cannot help joining with Shaftsbury, who says, "that priests have made religion so very selfish, that I do not see, after all, what merit there is in it worth rewarding." Fear may deter from vice, but can never conduce to virtue.

The less we suppose the deity capable of cruelty or revenge, the higher our love must naturally rise; and it is certain that mankind is apt to undertake nobler and more difficult actions from the spirit of love, than from the passion of fear. There

* St. Mark says of the love of God, "This is the first commandment."

is a courage in our natures, which spurns at fear ; but a generosity in our frames, which disposes to love : and, if any man is base enough to be influenced by terror, it is because he has not had his mind sufficiently imbued with more worthy principles ; and, in this case, which is corrupt morals, it is too often found that even fear will have no avail. Instances are numberless of moral Pagans, independent of hope : for, though in the writings of the antients there are very fine reasonings upon a future life, and retributions of justice ; yet these appear to be rather the *effect* of their philosophy, than the *cause* of their virtue.

The Jesuits have a blasphemous tenet with regard to communicants : “ That *attrition* alone, “ which proceeds morely from the fear of hell- “ torments, without *contrition*, which comprehends “ the love of God, is sufficient to justify a sinner “ at the sacrament.”

I will here give you some of the truly religious sentiments of Father Queſnel, which I think regard this subject ; and, in order to raise your esteem for them, I need only tell you, they are some of the propositions condemned by the infamous bull *Unigenitus*.

“ As sin proceeds from a mistaken love of our- “ selves, so virtue proceeds from a true love of “ God.”

“ Fear stops only the hand ; but the heart re- “ maineth adherent to sin, as long as it is not di- “ rected by the love of justice.”

“ He, who refrains from evil only out of fear “ of punishment, commits it in his heart, and is “ already guilty of it before God.”

“ He, who is baptized, is yet under the law, “ even as a Jew, if he doth not fulfil it, or if he “ fulfil it only through fear.”

“ Moses,

“ Moses, and the prophets, the priests, and the
 “ doctors of the law are dead, without sending;
 “ any children to God, since they have made
 “ slaves, but through fear.”

“ They that are under the curse of the law, do
 “ no good; because it is equal sin to do evil, or
 “ to shun it through fear.”

“ He that approacheth God, should not come
 “ to him with brutal passions; nor be led by in-
 “ stinct or fear, as beasts, but by faith and love,
 “ as children.”

“ Slavish fear represents God as a severe impe-
 “ rious, unjust, and unmerciful master.”

To all which I shall add, that fear may make
 good citizens, but love alone makes good christians.
 And, upon the whole, I really think that in my
 doctrine there is mystery enough to exercise faith;
 and inducements sufficient to influence action.

Adieu, my Fanny!

HENRY.

Several thoughts occurred to me upon this sub-
 ject, but I think I have hinted them in former
 letters.

LETTER CCLXXXIII.

I HAVE, ever since the close of my late nice and
 extraordinary subject; been examining and view-
 ing it in several lights, to find out whether my
 reasoning had proceeded from the prejudice of for-
 mer opinions, or had arisen from an hope produced
 by a sinner's fear. But I found, that, during a
 constant neglect of religious and christian duties,
 and a free indulgence of a debauched and libertine
 life, I preserved an unhesitating belief in the or-
 thodoxy of hell-torments; and that, 'till within
 these

these few years, that is, since I became in practice, as well as belief, a christian, I never had the least doubt upon the subject. The truth is, that I had never before given myself leisure to reason about religion, and had entirely rested upon a childish belief, instead of supporting myself by a rational faith. Perhaps a dispute upon this subject may be put an end to by a very strong, though not obvious, distinction between *punishment* and *miser*y; and I will agree with the orthodoxy, that sinners may be eternally punished, though not eternally miserable. A less degree of bliss, than we are taught from reason and revelation, our souls are capable of, is a punishment, but not a misery; and, after having passed through a state of purgation and contrition, emblemized by the *purging so as by fire*, as is sufficient to fulfil the measure of divine laws, some inferior degree of immortal bliss, may be the highest portion of a sinner's redemption; and the consciousness that such limitation proceeded from his own vices, or demerits, may be that punishment, which is described in Scripture by the metaphor of *the worm that never dieth*.

As I have, through the course of this argument, made use merely of human reason, instead of scriptural authority, I shall here call in aid some profane writing to support me. Socrates speaks by Plato in his Gorgias, much to this same purpose; and again in his Phædo, where he is discoursing just before his death. I have not the book here, or I would send you the quotations.

Now I can hardly suffer this to pass for profane authority; for he was not only the greatest heathen that ever lived, but was styled, by some of the Fathers of the church, a christian before christianity; and * Erasmus seems to consider him as an inspired

Sante Socrates, ora pro nobis!

person.

person. Perhaps, the fulness of time being then near at hand, and the world, as it were, entreat with the God of life and immortality, some ray of divinity might have illumined that great man, as the sun disperses a twilight, before itself appears.

It was at this remarkable era, when moral philosophy was brought to the highest pitch that ever it arrived at in the heathen world, that Socrates, or Plato for him, acknowledged the insufficiency of natural reason to perfect this great scheme, and called aloud for a revelation, to dispel the mists of error, and afford us a certain, infallible, and safe guide to direct mankind in the paths of virtue.

If I have erred in my reasonings upon this subject, it has been owing more to the weakness of my understanding, than the wickedness of my heart. So I shall conclude here with the two last lines of Buckingham's epitaph, the whole of which I once translated for you :

*Humanum est errare, et nescire :
Eus enim, miserrare mei !*

HENRY.

LETTER CCLXXXIV.

My dear HARRY,

HOW tremendously near have I been to the extreme verge of an awful eternity, since I wrote last to you ! The world and all its vanities receded instant before the glorious prospect of a happy immortality : my soul stood hovering on the wing, like the last blaze of a poor dying taper, while nothing but my love for you seemed to retard its flight. Indeed, my heart's sincere, and only transport, hadst thou been here, I am sure I should have

have died ! I every moment expected your coming, and the fond hope of expiring in your arms, made me hold in life by force, and suffer the severest torments, with a resolution which has surprized myself. However, it has pleased heaven, by a kind of miracle, to restore me back to life, to love and thee, and what he wills is best.

Tell me my heart's best health, when will you come to sooth my anxious mind, and raise my drooping spirits ? for I want your aid extremely, not only to relieve me from solitude, but from company too ; for I am incumbered at present, with two or three officious well-meaning people, who think one is to hang or drown themselves, the moment they are left alone, and so relieve the guard by turns : you guess who they are, and know also that it requires the utmost vigour of health, and cheerfulness of mind, to support their company ; for they are of that race of mortals, who, for want of something to say, are eternally talking. This is miserable physick for my disordered *mind* and *body*, the sensible calm philosophy of thy loved converse, is my panacea for *both*.

Pythagoras says, the eyes cannot be cured without the head, the head without the body, nor the body without the soul : and Plato says, that moral discourses procure health to the body, by giving peace to the soul, upon which the body depends. Say what day shall I be in perfect health.

Adieu !

FRANCES.

A second letter is missing here.

LETTER CCLXXXV.

My dearest REDIVIVA,

I RECEIVED your letter of last post, wrote by your own dear hand, which gave me extreme transport. What your secretary said of your health, or rather of your life, which I was for a thousand years alarmed about, could not make my mind easy, 'till I had the confirmation from yourself. How I passed the age between the two posts, would be too tedious a detail to trouble you with now.

I was ill for several days, of the worst sort of illness, an inattention to reading, and a lowness of spirits. It was upon these hints that I wrote to you for the precedent of a will, though I pretended it was for another person, for fear of alarming you; and you cannot imagine what a shock it gave me, that I had deferred a matter of such consequence to you, and to our dear pledge, so long. I wrote that letter from my bed, and lay down between every paragraph.

What a sympathy was between us at the same time! for I think we fell ill and recovered, at the same instant. How lucky it was too, that neither of us knew the other was ill, 'till we had both recovered!

I am no farther displeased at your having made use of *our* money, than that you should mention it. In a fortnight, from this date, I design to be in town; neither my health or business will permit me sooner.

Put up the inclosed along with my papers. Farewel, my redeemed, my dearest life!

HENRY.

The paper, which he inclosed, was his will, in the wrapper of which was the following writing:

AS my marriage, which I hereby publish, which I have privately owned to some friends already, and which I hope, long before these seals shall be broke open, I shall find myself at liberty to acknowledge to all the world, may surprize some of my relations and friends, to whom I would, living or dying, give satisfaction in any particular relating to myself, I leave this declaration behind me for their perusal.

I was not over-reached into this match by art, nor hurried into it by passion; but, from long experience of her sense and worth, I reasoned myself into it: and that I have not had any cause to change my opinion since, may be seen by my leaving this writing uncanceled at my death.

I considered, that there were three things necessary in a wife, which the world or myself should approve; Money, to accommodate my fortunes;—Birth, to satisfy the pride of my relations;—and Sense, to render my own life happy.

I considered, that it was an extraordinary chance for one man to compass all three; any one of which being as much good luck as generally falls to one man's share, and the last the most seldom: there was, then, no dispute which of them I should prefer, considering that I was, at that time, thirty-six years of age, and that “a man, who is born
“ of a woman, has but a short time to live,” and a much shorter to be happy.

I considered, that I had formed my own mind, and made my own fortune too, having never had tutor or patron to either; and that my friends ought surely to give me leave to frame my own happiness too.

I found I had so engaged her affections, that no other man could make her happy ; and so dallied with her character, that only myself could repair it. Thus honour, justice, and generosity concurred, to what my love and reason had before approved.

The progress of our loves may be seen in a collection of our letters, which are, at present, in the hands of a friend ; and, in reading them, one may see how our studies, sentiments, and whole turn of mind, were adapted for each * other : so that, in our case, it might most emphatically be said, " Whom the Lord hath joined, let no man put asunder." Amen.

I am in my constitutional principles, for a limited monarchy ; and, in my national policy, for the Hanover succession ; and think that any one, who differs from me, must do so more from private reasons, than any regard to the public good.

January 19, 1753.

There was also inclosed, in the will, the following poem of Pope's :

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

DEO OPT. MAX.

FATHER of all ! in ev'ry age,
In ev'ry clime ador'd,
By faint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord !

* Unum opus & requiem pariter disponimus ambo.
PERSIUS.

Thou great first cause, least understood !
Who all my sense confin'd
To know but this, that thou art good,
And that myself am blind :

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill ;
And binding nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.

What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This, teach me more than hell to shun,
That, more than heav'n pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away :
For God is paid, when man receives ;
T' enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round.

Let not this weak and erring hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land,
On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart
Still in the right to stay ;
If I am wrong, oh ! teach my heart
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has deny'd,
Or aught thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
 To hide the fault I see;
 That mercy I to others shew,
 That mercy shew to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so,
 Since quicken'd by thy breath;
 Oh! lead me, wherefoe'er I go,
 Through this day's life or death!

This day be bread and peace my lot;
 All else beneath the sun,
 Thou know'st if best bestow'd, or not,
 And let thy will be done.

To Thee, whose temple is all space,
 Whose altar, earth, sea, skies!
 One chorus let all Being raise!
 All nature's incense rise!

L E T T E R CCLXXXVI.

TELL me, my dearest Harry, can my whole life, and I would have it a long one for that purpose, spent in a continued series of love and gratitude to thee, make a sufficient return for the generous kindness you express towards me? Oh my soul's joy! my heart o'erflows with tenderness, and soft ideas crowd too fast upon me, to admit of poor expression; excuse it then, and read my rapture in thy own dear breast.

With heart-felt praise, and with a zeal more fervent, than cloystered nun, or anchorite e'er knew, I bless that gracious power who has restored thy life, thy health to me, and to mankind; and oh! how truly good has the Almighty been to me, perhaps

haps scarce thankful enough for my own recovery, he wakes my gratitude upon a theme, which fills my soul with true devotion, and makes it all his own. Thus has heaven multiplied its mercies on me, by giving me, I hope, a just and proper sense of them.

Need I tell you, that I am transported at the thoughts of seeing you, as you promise. I have cried out more than once, since I received your dear letter.

“Gallop apace ye fiery footed steeds, &c.” I have the pleasure to inform you that I am much better, than when I wrote last, tho’ still very weak; but I am certain that Hygea will return with thee, and as I shall be happier then, I shall, I am sure, in every sense, be better.

I own I am not displeased, that since we both happened to be ill, we were so at the same time, since we were not together, and as the same sympathy accompanied our recovery, may a truly tender and affectionate one ever subsist between us.

Adieu and haste!

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCLXXXVII.

I AM returned home safe to my elysium, and did not see so sweet a place since I left it. A cow dead, two sheep, six turkeys, two ducks, and a goose stolen, was all my loss, while I was away. I forgot; a ferret died. These things have greatly ruffled the calmness of my uncle’s temper, especially the first; for it was one of my weaver’s cows, which I had sold to him, about a month before; and thought it between half honest and half humane to make good his loss. My uncle disputed

very logically with me, upon this head ; that it was not an act which honestly required, because I had fulfilled my part already, in delivering the cow ; and was not to be a guarantee against accidents. He said, that humanity was no more concerned with him, than any other object of charity, &c. &c. All which I acknowledge to be true ; and yet I had some strong idea roving in my mind, that I was but acting justly ; not from any particular law of morality or religion, but from something higher, that adapts itself to many nice circumstances, which express laws cannot reach. This is, I suppose, what the philosophers and divines stile conscience ; something, as Prior expresses it,

“ Beyond the fix'd and settled rules

“ Of vice and virtue in the schools,” &c.*

There is, certainly, such a thing as original truth, coeval with eternity ; part of the essence of God, and not a law of his ordaining. This is that charming idea, which the mind of man contemplates in itself with so much philosophic rapture. This primitive reason is the great criterion, which guides noble or unenslaved minds, when they see fit to depart from, exceed, or act directly opposite to the express laws of God, or man ; which being but imperfect deductions from that original source, necessarily established for the regulation of men's lives, who have not sense or leisure to contemplate the native beauty of truth, or virtue enough to embrace it, may be deviated, according as reason or conscience instructs the unprejudiced mind, the great law would have been directed in such a particular case or instance. I am extremely provoked

* See the story of Quintus Scævola in Tully's Offices, book III. chap. xv.

at the unphilosophic assertion of Descartes, "that
"two and two make four, not from original ne-
"cessity, but because God Almighty willed it so."

I have just sent to the stage; and, if a place be
vacant, I shall go up to town in it.

Adieu!

HENRY.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCLXXXVIII.

My dear FANNY,

AS to the conversation with —, I should be
much obliged, if you would let me know
who was the second person; which, upon my ho-
nour, I shall never mention either to him or the
other; and this you may be assured of, both upon
your account and mine. It may be of use to me
to know his confident upon this occasion, but only
so, if I keep my mind to myself.

Such expressions, as he made use of, though the
same that you quoted, may very well bear a diffe-
rent sense from what mistake, prejudice against
him, or in favour of me, might possibly apprehend
them in; or, even supposing them capable of no
other meaning, but the unkind one reported to
you, yet the ill-nature of the tongue does not al-
ways proceed from the malice of the heart; and
the unmeaning purposes of a light reverie, or the
vague folly of an idle dream, may sometimes be
mistaken for a deliberate and determined scheme of
action. I have not, thank Providence, in my own
heart, malice to any man: I have therefore no
jealousy of any one's evil designs towards me. The
few I love, I love entirely, both with friendship
and esteem: Those, whom I merely love not, (for

I hate no one) have my general benevolence and charity. This happy cast of mind has enabled me to live hitherto very easily and comfortably, both in the world, and my own closet; and has turned the edge of many mortifications and disappointments, I have met with, in my communication with mankind; which, though frequent, I may be supposed to be not well qualified to bear with; as, from the general favourable opinion I have of human nature, in honour to its Creator, the conviction of yesterday prepares me not for the disappointment of to-morrow. My affections vary, but my friendships never; for the first depend upon others, but the latter upon myself; or, rather, this rests upon an higher principle than the slight basis of human connections. This principle is not my own; it was graciously lent me by Providence, who would have unkindly given me life without it. I will spend it here with pious use, and pay it back with grateful tribute! And the Lord incline our hearts to keep this law!

A letter is missing here.

LETTER CCLXXXIX.

My FANNY,

I DO not remember what I said in the letter, which inclosed you Fielding's Essay; but am certain, from the tenor of my opinion of you, that I did not mean to reprimand you for the misapplication of your time, in reading books of amusement only. When I speak of sense, honour, or virtue, you ought to understand it as a compliment, a just one, to you; not meant to upbraid you for the want of these excellencies. Why am I eternally mistaken?

You

You say, that the present uneasiness of your mind calls for amusement. I should think, that amusements were fitter for a mind at ease. Irksome thoughts are not to be relieved by trifles; and it requires high studies, and deep reflections, to divert us from present ills, or melancholy prospects. But let amusement be the word! Will not Shakespear's plays amuse you better than Duffey's, and would you not find better entertainment in the Spectator than the Rambler? No boarding-school girl reads more for amusement than I do. I would have you do so too: for I know very well, that sense, philosophy, and virtue will make any reading an higher entertainment to you; and that you are capable of receiving pleasure or amusement from many writings, which are capable of instructing half the world. This was what I meant to hint to you, by any of my letters on this subject; that the *utile* was not inconsistent with the *duki*; as I was too anxious for even your amusements, to leave them to chance or carelessness for the hap. I recommended some papers to you lately, which, I flattered myself, would have highly amused you; as I am sure the comments, I expected from you, upon them, would have greatly entertained me. But I will not presume to set you tasks—Your own good sense be your guide!

I am sincerely concerned to find you still in that plaintive mood of "misfortunes, anxiety of mind," &c. I hope, and believe, that you are not in any circumstance of life, which can provoke such melancholy reflections. In short, I have observed, that there is a great deal of sense and virtue, with some smattering of philosophy, in the world; but that great, noble, and comprehensive quality, called fortitude, seems to have quite forsaken mankind; and Scarron might well say, if, in truth, he could even say so much,

“None, but myself, could e’er that pitch attain,
 “To sport with misery, and jest in pain.”

May Heaven, most earnestly solicited by my prayers, defend my dearest, amiable love from both! and from every evil, natural and moral, except the penalties, which she deserves herself! and then surely her happiness here will be an earnest of that bliss, which perfect spirits enjoy hereafter. Amen to that sweet prayer!

Sir Francis Bacon has a fine passage, which may be quoted here, as a noble definition of that constancy, and fortitude of mind, which I am lamenting; “prepared for every event, armed in all
 “fortunes, foreseeing without fear, enjoying without satiety, and suffering without impatience.” This great character is in the power of so small a portion of sense and virtue to attain to, that, for my part, I am resolved to commence hero from the date of this letter. Adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CCXC.

I HAD the provoking pleasure of receiving two letters from my dear Harry, by yesterday’s post. Tho’ they were of different dates, the post-mark was the same on both; so that these teasing delays must be owing to the person, you send with your letters.

We do indeed too often misapprehend each other. I make no doubt but the fault lies chiefly on my side; for I am conscious I have too much quickness in my disposition; which, joined to the earnest desire I have to render myself agreeable to you, puts me on endeavouring to justify or explain away my faults, perhaps, with too much warmth. It is long
 since

since I have agreed with my dear preceptor, in owning that trifles will not, even for the present moment, amuse a rational mind. There is a kind of self-contempt inseparable from the mis-spending our time, in pursuit of any thing, which does not tend to make us wiser or better, and of course happier. But this feeling is, I believe, only known to intelligent minds; tho' I have heard people complain of throwing away their time on a book, that did not please them, who were utterly incapable of making any reflection, or forming any sentiment from Milton, Shakespear, or Addison.

It is, indeed, as my sweet love observes, not in the power of trifles to relieve or calm the sorrows of the mind, or divert the thoughts from bodily pain. It is only in the province of religion, philosophy, and sense to aid us in surmounting present ills, by teaching us to look forward to an happy futurity.

As I had entered into a regular course of reading the Spectators, I have not yet gone thro' the particular set of papers, you recommended. I think it is impossible you should doubt my being really charmed with those I have met: But, alas! what comment could you expect from me on subjects, where the little understanding I am mistress of may be compared to an infant just weaned from leading-strings, afraid to make a step without a guide?

I never did set up for the least degree of fortitude: My sensations are much too lively for a Stoic: A decent resignation to the will of the Supreme Being is the utmost I aspire to. Nor do I look upon it, that my complaining to you can be deemed a breach of duty, in this point: You are so much myself, and every faculty of my soul is so much devoted to you, that I can scarce call them mine. You have my thoughts all wild and uncor-

rected: Tho' you may not approve them, you should pardon while you endeavour to reform them, as you do those faulty ones that rise involuntary in your own heart. "For where is the "palace whereinto foul things intrude not?"

My heart's dear Harry must give me leave to assure him, I am sincerely grateful for that elegant and affecting solicitude he expresses for my happiness; of which he is, and I hope ever will be, the first and only agent in the hand of Heaven. May it reward and bless him for the kindness, and return those wishes which he makes for me to him an hundred fold!

You do me but strict justice, when you believe that nothing, but *extreme illness*, or some very extraordinary accident, could prevent my writing. Your not hearing from me, by Saturday's post, was owing to the *first*. I was the whole day in racking pain, and could not rest three minutes in any place; therefore, as I had no letter from you to answer, I thought it cruel to make you uneasy with my pains.

Tho' I am transported at the thoughts of seeing my dearest Harry, I would, by no means, desire you to come, unless you can do it with convenience to yourself; for I would have you leave all your cares behind, when your dear presence is to banish mine. But in this, and every thing, I submit myself to your discretion and your love.

Adieu, my dearest life! May it be as consistent with your business, as I am sure it is with your inclinations, soon to see your fond and faithful

FANNY.

L E T T E R CCXCI.

My dearest FANNY,

YOU know I was lately angry: And I am so ashamed of it, that I have been recollecting what my reading, or own reflections can suggest, first, to palliate the offence for what is past; and to prevent, for the future, the ill effects of a vice and weakness, which I think even I have sense and virtue enough to guard myself from.

The best hints, which I shall offer here, are taken from an essay upon this very subject of anger, wrote by lord Verulam.

To extinguish this passion entirely, is but a bravery of the Stoics: For, like all ill habits, we must cure ourselves by degrees; as a skilful rider manages an headstrong horse, guides his steps in the safest course, and pulls and relaxes the rein by turns. The reason that so few people reclaim themselves from bad affections, is owing more to want of judgment than virtue. We grow careless upon finding the imperfections of human nature not easily conquered by the perfection of philosophy; not being aware that habit must be overcome by habit; as regimen cures chronical distempers better than medicines. Intermissions are as necessary in ethics, as in physic. The Scriptures, which are better guides in morals, than the whole body of philosophers, give some indulgence to human frailty in this particular: "Be ye angry, but sin not." And in another place, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath;" which seem to declare, that the continuance of anger, not the first start of it, makes the vice. Bacon says, the best way to cure the natural inclination or habit of resentment, is to reflect upon the effects of anger, "how it troubles a man's life;" and the best time to do this is to
look

look back upon anger, when the fit is over. Seneca says well, that "Anger is like a ruin, which breaks itself upon that it falls." Socrates being asked what a man was doing, who was seen in the street chaffing himself in a rage, answered justly, "he is punishing an angry man." The Scripture exhorts us to possess our souls in patience; then whoever is out of patience, is out of possession of his soul. A passionate man may be compared to a bee, according to Virgil's expression, that † when they sting, they lose their spirit in the wound. Perhaps this may leave an open to sarcasm, to compare a calm man to a drone. Bacon says, it ought to make men ashamed of anger, the consideration of those persons, who are most subject to it; children, women, old people, and sick folks. Men should carry their resentment rather with scorn, than passion; especially where our pride is piqued; for that same pride should rather shew us above, than below an injury or affront. Many other arguments, drawn from prudence, morality and religion, occur to me at present; but, I am sure, there are none of them necessary to inform your sense and understanding; and all I mean by this essay, is to furnish you with a few hints to be offered to my own consideration, whenever you find me relapsing into that weakness, which you may remember in a former letter, sometime ago, I mentioned as the only thing, which, now and then, gets the better of the tenor of my philosophy.

Adieu, my fairest guide! I assure you, that I fly to your arms with all the impatience of an angry man, and with all that good-nature and affection, which passionate persons are remarkable for.

ATHENODORUS.

† *Animasque in vulnere ponunt.*

VIRG.

L E T T E R CCXCII.

Dear FANNY,

I AM just returned from my expedition to Scotland; and, to give you my opinion of it, I need only say, that, since I was obliged to go, I am glad it is over.

You cannot imagine, in what light every thing, both at bed and board, appeared to me, who have been used all my life to travel through the best roads in England; for, though I am no great epicure, yet I look upon cleanliness not to be any extraordinary luxury; though Mandeville calls it so, when he wants to help out a disingenuous argument.

I have rode several days through this quondam kingdom; and was so persuaded, that I had strayed into Gulliver's country of Hounhymns, that I was almost tempted to alight from my horse, and swear allegiance to him; for I could not perceive a grain of corn, through all the fields, but oats; nor any one house that was too good for a stable. And when at last I chanced to espy a *garden* of wheat, I rejoiced, like the shipwreck'd philosopher, who, thinking himself cast away upon a desert island, when he observed a circle described on the sands, cried out, "Courage my friends, for human creatures inhabit here."

There is a saying among foreigners, who observe the cleverness of the generality of the Scotch gentlemen, who travel abroad, that Scotland keeps all her fools at home: But I think they are mistaken in this particular; for, really, those of that nation, whom I have had any sort of commerce with, are "ne feuls." I shall not press this remark farther, as I think all national reflections both unphilosophic and unjust. I shall take leave of you now; for, as

WY

my ingenious hostess of the *garter* often expresses herself, I am tired after my fatigue.

Adieu ! my own Fanny,

HENRY.

L E T T E R CCXIII.

My dear HARRY,

I THINK your noble correspondent makes a very poor figure in his last letter. I own, I had a better opinion of his sense and spirit, than to suppose he could be alarmed at finding a person, who possessed these merits in a higher degree, than himself; but I am now convinced, that the superiority you demonstrated, is the reason of his declining any farther connection with you. It is not easy to fall, with a good grace, from a principal to a second, in any point which we have much at heart; nor can we bear the person, whose superior excellence makes us appear in an inferior light, even to ourselves. Swift is the only author, or person, I ever met with, who honestly confesses this foible :

“ Why must I be outdone by Gay,
 “ In my own hum'rous, biting way ?
 “ Arbuthnot is no more my friend,
 “ Who dares to irony pretend ;
 “ Which I was born to introduce,
 “ Refin'd at first, and shew'd its use.”

When I plained my lonely situation, did I seem to lament the want of any friend, or companion, but thee ? Indeed, I neither did, nor do ; for all other company and converse are tasteless to me. I wish I had religion or philosophy sufficient to support your absence with a proper firmness, I will not say, unconcern. But to those who truly love, believe

me,

me, *the best authors* appear but bad comforters, under the pains of separation : To me they must be rather a disservice, than an help ; as they would but more strongly remind me of thee, thou charming, practisessence of them all ! However, if I live, I will fall into whatever course of reading you think proper, as I shall always be pleased with adopting your sentiments, or modelling mine by them, as far as my poor, little capacity will admit. But let me beg you not to attempt curing me of the pain, which your absence will ever give me ; for, as nothing but indifference can render me easy in that particular, be assured it is out of your power to make me so.

Notwithstanding your situation, which I know requires your presence, I very seriously and sincerely wish you here, at this and every moment. There is no saying how far the weakness of my body affects my mind : Perhaps my being disqualified for every other pleasure and satisfaction, makes me to feel your loss more strongly. Be that as it will, I cannot help thinking it a little melancholy to be left in the forlorn, unsettled way, I am in my present condition. How is the time fixed for your coming, when my falling ill is so uncertain ? And sure you need not grudge me the happiness of seeing you a little sooner than, perhaps, my latest moment. However, if it is inconvenient, I relinquish your promise ; for I shall always prefer your interest to my satisfaction ; nor can I receive any joy from the thoughts of your coming with reluctance to me.

Adieu ! my heart's dear Harry !

L E T T E R CCXCIV.

My dear FANNY,

YOUR observation upon —— is extremely just, and expressed in a very pretty turn and manner; and tho' I did not flatter myself in the way you have taken it, yet that may rather be his reason, than none at all; for, as to the objection he makes, with regard to the expence, I think my letters sufficiently proved that the expence of my scheme would be considerably less than his own plan.

Your remarks upon —— puts me in mind of a passage of Sir Francis Bacon's Treatise upon the Wisdom of the Antients, where he labours to give a new moral to the old fables of antiquity. Juno is said to be woo'd by Jupiter, in the form of a cuckow; upon which he makes the following comment: "That men often impede their own success
" by ostentation of superior merit; and that especially with persons, who have more arrogance
" and pride, intimated by the character of Juno,
" than sense or merit. The surest way to win
" their favour is, to appear as mean and humble,
" both in virtue and outward appearance, as possible."

The whole treatise, which I am now quoting from, is, in my opinion, a very poor performance, and much below so great a man. The morals drawn from the tales of the Pantheon are wretchedly forced, and many of them improperly adapted. His stile is ordinary, and expressions low.

My dearest life, you cannot surely think, that I would not rather be with you, even in town, than from you, even here: Why then do you seem to upbraid me? Oh never, never do so again. Be assured this once for all, and then never let a doubt

or

or surmise disturb your breast, that I never stay a day from you, but when it is necessary I should, both for your present security and future happiness. You can surely calculate pretty near the time, you would, most particularly desire my attendance; and it will certainly be time enough for me to go up then. If I should go at present, perhaps I might be, for many reasons, under a necessity of leaving you, at that time, I should most wish to be with you. Thus your own impatience would disappoint your end. I shewed the same impatience in desiring you to come down; but I have been uneasy, ever since, about it, as I am apprehensive the attempt would be extremely hazardous, and the journey too fatiguing; and an unlucky *contretemps* might happen in the country, before you could be able to return again. I hope this letter will reach you time enough to prevent you; or, rather, I hope your prudence has corrected my indiscretion already. There are many reasons, too, against your coming at present; which, however material in themselves, are insignificant to mention, after the objection I have made, of your danger.

I am, indeed I am, tout a vous seul.

L E T T E R CCXCV.

My dearest FANNY,

TUESDAY's post did not bring me any letter from you. In your present situation, you may judge how uneasy I must be, upon such an occasion. Accordingly I sat down to scold, or complain, which are synonymous terms.—But stay, says I: Before my letter need go, another post may come in; and many accidents may have prevented her writing, or made the letter miscarry, without her illness or neglect. Thus, my pet, do I always deal
with

with you, and would sooner suspect improbabilities, or even my own senses, than your truth; and should, in like circumstances, behave, with regard to you, like that noble Venetian, who, seeing a looking glass make some reflections on his wife, broke it with his cane, crying out, "Thou lyest."

Farewel, my dearest life! I am not less yours than ever; and need no more to assure you, I am, totally, and for ever, yours.

HENRY.

LETTER CCXCVI.

MY dearest Fanny tells me, that it is only in my power to make her unhappy. 'Tis a secret you may safely trust me with, and to make you the more secure, I do hereby place the same confidence in you. I am sure that we shall never render one another uneasy by design, and inadvertence can have no excuse, when our mutual attention should be constantly directed toward each others happiness. If ever this charming union should be broken in upon, on your part, my love might induce me to forgive you, but should it happen, on my side, my justice would hinder me from ever forgiving myself.

I should not speak thus to you, if my heart had not acquired a perfect confidence and acquiescence, in your sense and behaviour; and 'tis while it o'erflows with love and fondness toward you, that I tremble most at the bare possibility of that charming current, being diverted or dried up. 'Tis not in pain or sickness, but in the vigour of health and pleasure, that the apprehensions of death use to shock us most.

Our fine weather is broke, and yet there is something not displeasing to me, in this vicissitude. I
may

may say with Milton, in the same words, tho' not in the same sense,

“ To me each season, and its change
 “ All please alike.”

for, tho' I have a great deal of constancy, with regard to love and friendship, I delight extremely in every variety which nature has indulgently contrived, either for pleasure or for use.

Adieu !

L E T T E R C C X C V I I .

I AM, my dearest Fanny, in as uneasy and disagreeable circumstances, at present, as any man can be, who does not labour under guilt or pain ; and if it was not for that happy and philosophic turn of mind, which I have endeavoured to cultivate in myself these many years, I cannot answer to what extravagance I might be disturbed, considering the natural violence of my passions, and that sanguine melancholic disposition, that was born with me. One might imagine that the lucky complexion I have contrived to give to my thoughts, passions and affections, was owing to a presentiment, that at some time or other of my life, I should need a sufficient pilot or guide, to conduct me safe, thro' some unforeseen storm or labyrinth : But every man of common sense and knowledge of life, has naturally such a presentiment : In so much, that it amazes me, to find so few apply their thoughts to the study of moral philosophy ; when any other art or science, a man may live and die, without having an opportunity, or necessity of practising ; but this, every day may afford him some occasion of exercising ; and he must be a very lucky person, or die very young, if he is not called upon, some time or other of his life,

life, for the full exertion of it. It is a science which requires no master; for every man may teach it to himself that will be at the pains; *without interruption, or interfering with any business, study or pleasure.* What would a man give for an art, which could procure him that state, or circumstance of life, upon which his wished for happiness is planned? What art then can come so near to it as this, which renders our happiness of life independent of any state, or circumstance of it? *O Philosophia Dux Vitæ!*

Write to me often, in aid of my philosophy. I am so overcome with stupidity, by the disagreeable business of these three days, that I cannot say any thing to you at present, in the stile or manner, which an address of any kind to you, would otherwise inspire me with. However, this alteration in my mind has not made any in my heart, which is as really yours, in metaphor, as it is my own in anatomy.

HENRY.

LETTER CCXCVIII.

My dear FANNY,

THO' I have wrote you a letter by this post, already, it does not satisfy my love, tho' it fulfils my duty, and I have stopped here, at Carlow, merely to tell you, that I have got so far on my journey, escaped from rain, and am drinking, with as much love, honour, and affection, as ever man had for such relations, my wife and child's health. God bless you both, and me too, only as I shall deserve from each of you: For on these terms alone, am I capable of happiness in this life, or intitled to it in the next.

Provi-

Providence has shower'd down blessings unmerited on us both, which we ought to look upon as a particular obligation, superadded to the general one which all mankind originally lye under, to be not only virtuous, but religious also. Let us henceforth endeavour to deserve those favours, which Heaven has already bestowed upon us *gratis*, that by attempting, at least, to discharge that debt, we may establish a fund of credit for the future.

There is not a creature breathing, of whose virtue, religion, or moral disposition, I have a better opinion than of yours : Your only weakness, is want of resolution upon a few occasions to put some of these rare qualities in execution. But let this very just reflection begin to rouse you to active virtue, that this weakness of human nature is the chief cause of all the follies and vices of mankind : Few persons err thro' ignorance, and no man is wicked for want of moral dispositions ; 'tis habit only that renders us vicious ; for by giving way to a faintness of resolution, this negative vice runs us, by degrees, into positive guilt.

There are three things, which I have often recommended to you, in general terms, and that I must now make it a point with you to observe for the future. To rise early, to read more for the improvement of your mind, than the entertainment of your fancy ; and to attend regularly all the *positive* duties of religion. I want to introduce you to the world in the advantageous light your sense and virtue is capable of, more my vanity, or highest pride, need not require.

Adieu, my fondest wish, and
most rational desire,

HENRY.

LETTER CCXCIX.

December 17, 1752. N. S.

WHAT a dismal vacuum has my life been since my dearest Harry left me ! how long do even these short days appear, and oh how insupportably tedious are the nights ! I have neither slept, nor been awake, since I saw you : A lethargic heaviness oppresses me all day, and a wakeful fearfulness seizes me at night. I find myself unhappy, by the joint recollection of your tenderness when present ; and the fear of your indifference when absent. You seem to meet me with pleasure, but leave me without regret. 'Tis four days since we parted, and I have not heard from you, tho' I think the post might have answered sooner. Let those days, and every one, 'till I receive your letter, be number'd among those which have been already lost in this year's stile ; they shall not be admitted into my calendar, nor reckoned in the diary of my life.

Adieu !

Your own Heautonti.

LETTER CCC.

I With, my dear Fanny, you would quit that plaintive elegiac strain you accost me with every second or third post. You are either sick, angry, or jealous, I observe once a week. Now let me supply you with a short sketch of *natural philosophy*, to obviate the doubts of your last letter.

I fly to your arms with all the eagerness of a lover, but quit them with the calmness of a friend ; and you are alarmed, only because you have mistaken eagerness for love, and calmness for indifference. I rather love you better at parting, as one does all goods when they are deprived of them.

I shall

I shall subscribe myself, as I have often done before, and shall persevere to the end, your lover and your friend, with this happy addition of

Your husband also.

HENRY.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R C C C I.

Dear FANNY,

Maidenball.

YOU have not, in any degree, express'd the many charming and useful ways I want your presence, society, and assistance here: however, there are some things which support and comfort me under this separation; for, as Young says,—
I elaborate

An artificial happiness from pains.

The fond endearments we pass to and from, in absence, strengthen and establish by use, our love and friendship for each other,

“ So thinking on thy charming youth,

“ I'll love thee o'er again in age.”

we reflect on each other in a more tender and polite manner, in absence; our faults are less obvious, by being placed at a greater distance; no disgust can affect us, nor any sudden passion transport us; it must be malice præpensè, to offend in a correspondence: we are, when separate, improving our minds, regulating our passions, and forming our manners, with a view to our mutual happiness; which caprices, picques, and domestic cares might have too frequently interrupted our application to, had we lived sooner together. We are, at present, as it were, serving an apprenticeship to matrimony, before we set up for ourselves.

VOL. II.

M

I have

I have often made use of the fondest and most endearing expressions towards you, and have declared my tenderness and esteem for you, with all the warmth

“ Of youthful poets fancy, when they love.”
and yet, I assure you, that I always thought I fell short of that praise, which it was in the power of your merit to deserve: you wanted, indeed, some few things to render you perfect, but I always thought, as I do now, that you had the fund within yourself; do but exert that natural good understanding, and innate virtue, which Providence has so profusely blest you with, and you need not become pupil to the Greek or Roman names: never let word or action escape you, even of the most minute consequence, without first consulting your best sense about it; and make use of your understanding and reflection, rather to *authorise* your words and actions, than to *justify* them; for we have all of us such a partiality to whatever we have either said or done, that tho’ we should resolve to examine our conduct, with all the disinterestedness of a third person, we shall find it hardly possible to rid ourselves of prepossession.

The generality of mankind, owe the ruin of their happiness, or fortunes to the indiscretion of imagining many things, too insignificant for consideration; which, tho’ not the *doors*, may be the *binges*, upon which they turn, *

“ Think nought a trifle, tho’ it small appear,
“ Small sands the mountain, moments make the
“ year,
“ And trifles life; your care to trifles give,
“ Or you may die, before you learn to live.”

* Optima cujusque rei natura in portionibus ejus minimis observatur. Plin. Hist. Nat.

But

But you have a better authority for this, in Ecclesiasticus, "He that despiseth small things, shall perish, by little and little."

Farewel,

HENRY.

L E T T E R CCCII.

Dear FANNY,

Maidenhall.

AS I condoled with you upon the change in the weather last post, I think it fair to congratulate you now, upon its amendment; for 'tis greatly improved since I came home.

I found nothing done here since I went abroad, but a great many things *undone*, which I had left safe and well: I am exerting myself, to make amends, but am greatly distressed for want of money: there are many and large demands, upon me here, and you know how poor I left Dublin.

I hope you like the country, and the people where you are, and that you will take the wholesome advantage of your present situation, by rising early, and using exercise. Do, my dearest Fanny, let me meet you healthy, sprightly and clever, the first week in May, when my friend and I shall go to Dublin together, upon business of his. Read much, reflect more; read and reflect the things proper to improve your mind, and to regulate your life. Be all that I wish, in woman—For you can—

Adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CECIL.

Dear HARRY,

Castle-Carbery.

I WOULD have wrote to you last post, but that I fear'd my letter might possibly reach home before you, and by that means occasion some unlucky *contretemps*, from curious impertinents; but, as I hope you are, by this time, seated in your own *chamber*, and writing to your own Fanny, I venture to address you, from *mine*.

After a pleasant jaunt in the stage, for twenty miles, with tolerable company, the chair met, and brought us hither to dinner, where we pass our time, after a manner that would please you extremely, but is not yet quite easy to me: however, I hope that a little use, joined to my desire of conforming to your inclinations, will soon render early hours, no suppers, and exercise, agreeable to me. I have already made some progress in spinning, and when we meet, you will find me a more expeditious house-wife than Penelope; for I do believe that I could finish a web in something less than *ten years*. However, tho' this may be a contested point, I am quite certain, of not being found inferior to her, in constancy to my dear husband, and affection to our little son.

We have very cold weather here, which you perhaps, may not be sensible of, but in our lofty station we are exposed to the rudest assaults of Boreas, for we are raised to such a degree of eminence, that those in the valley consider the rocks and us as inhabitants of another region; while, in return, we look upon them as our antipodes. It was in this latitude of atmosphere that Juno screen'd herself from the attempt of Ixion: if you
was

was here, I know you would say our situation was almost *metaphysical*.

Your's from the clouds,

IRIS.

LETTER CCCIV.

I RECEIVED my dear Fanny's letter, and am glad to find that you arrived safe, and did not dislike your company on the road. You speak of exercise and early hours, as a tremendous experiment; but you'll find, in this, and indeed in most things, that the resolving upon it, is greater difficulty than the putting it into execution. When you have practised for a week, you'll find it become not only easy, but pleasant too: so that you will look back with regret, not only on the time, but the pleasure also, which you have suffered to pass by, unheeded, unenjoyed. Can that action be deemed difficult, which has health, pleasure, sense and virtue to recommend it?

What makes me more particularly in love with early hours, is that to them I owe whatever knowledge, reflection, morality, philosophy, religion, health or fortune, I possess at present; and tho' I can boast but very small portions of these advantages, yet the little I enjoy, may well appear extraordinary, in a man, who neither had or education, or patrimony. Aurora was my Minerva, my only Mentor. Early hours, not only afforded me leisure to read and think, but inspired me also to do both; for what time, or what spirit can a person have to exert himself, either in study or business, who rises not till mid-day? a former letter of mine to you, dated at four o'clock, in a summer's morning, and some others, written some time since, upon this subject, are well worth frequent

quent reading and reflection; * for indeed, there is something more in this matter, than is too generally imagined: for surely, if people knew, or considered how many several ways, early hours may be serviceable to them, the practice would not require one moment's hesitation.

Your's,

DILUCULUS.

LETTER CCCV.

I HAVE but just time to acknowledge the receipt of my dear Harry's sensible letter, to own the reasoning of it just, and to declare my concurrence, both in thought and act, with his very clever sentiments.

I spend all the mornings in studying the household oeconomy of this family, and find the sincerest satisfaction in every little acquirement of domestic knowledge, when I reflect, that it may, one day, oh when! be serviceable to you: nor shall I think any thing mean or difficult, below my observation, or above my capacity, that is proper for my sex or station.

I pass my time very agreeably, because very rationally here, and find a vast difference between this family, and the generality of my town acquaintance. How charming is virtue, religion, and good sense! without them, how insipid or offensive is conversation: how capricious is love, and how unstable is friendship! indeed, my Harry, I will never more attach my affections to any person, who wants principles; I will be certain, at least, that they have innocence to recommend them, before I engage myself in any intimacy.

* Letter XLVII. The three last paragraphs of letter CCCV. and letter CCVI.

My little honest heart has already suffered much, from its disappointments; but, I confess that they were owing to my own imprudence, for as Rochefaucault says, "We chuse our friends, rather for the qualities of the understanding, than those of the heart." But this is a weakness that I shall no more be guilty of; tho' to condemn myself still farther, I cannot boast that any of those persons, whom I have loved, except my poor dear, departed friend, * had any extraordinary understanding; and I really think that she had a sound heart too; for I attribute the latter part of her behaviour, to a certain mistake with regard to me, and which I am extremely concerned that she died, before I was at liberty to set her right about.

Perhaps, the indolence of my temper, which imprudently confined my acquaintance to one set, occasioned my attachments to them, as that quota of affection, which was originally in my nature, must necessarily diffuse itself into whatever channel was open to receive it. Which puts me in mind of your hugging a cat, when you were a child, as you told me in one of your letters, by way of exercising that fondness and benevolence of nature, which *certain cross people* would not give you an opportunity of exerting, upon fitter objects.

Adieu,

FRANCES.

LETTER CCCVI.

Dear FANNY,

Res.

I CAME hither from Wexford affizes to day, and this is my stage homeward. You see that, tho' I traverse the kingdom, amidst all the hurry;

* See letter XCIV. 2d page, 1st paragraph.

and variety of life I am engaged in, I never forget you, even for a single post.

I was introduced to Sir A. G. by Mr. C——, who received me with great politeness and affability. There is something remarkably mild and cheerful in his manners; and his whole character is amiable for humanity, and love to his country. I have known men of brighter parts, and more distinguished abilities, but never met with any one, my own Arthur * excepted, who in so short an acquaintance, engaged my affections. They both seem to be persons of that excellent and uncommon character, who have so confirmed a worthy nature, by habit, that it passes unnoticed by common observers, because it is never seen to exert itself, by philosophic struggles; and use has rendered it also, so familiar to themselves, that they become insensible to their own merit; for I remember our friend Arthur seem'd to look upon me as a flatterer, when I first told him, from characteristic observation, that he was an extraordinary person.

Rare qualities, like curious medals, may be esteemed at an high price, by certain virtuosi; but useful ones, like trading coin, bear the better stamp of currency. High merits, or extraordinary virtues, which gild only some particular actions, without illustrating the tenor of our lives, serve rather to obscure our general character, and may be compared,

——“ To snow upon the ravens back,

“ Or a rich jewel in an Æthiop's ear.”

Adieu my hope, and my possession, my most flattering hope, and my most certain possession.

HENRY.

* Arthur Newburgh, Esq;

L E T T E R CCCVII.

I HOPE my dear wanderer has by this time, arrived safe at home, and has read a little hundred of my letters, that I have directed at him, tho' I knew I could not receive any answer; but there is a certain chaste pleasure in performing a duty to one's friend, while they remain ignorant of the obligation; and I am much pleased with the fond folly of a lover, who, on the point of being shipwreck'd, wrote a tender billet to his mistress, tho' he expected the next wave would swallow up both himself and the letter.

I am much obliged to you for writing so constantly to me, more particularly at this time, when I want your kindness to counterbalance the ill nature and ingratitude of others. I am well pleased that you have been introduced to Sir A. G. He has a general good character, and from the handsome manner you speak of him in, I am certain he deserves it. What an uncommon gift you have, of looking into the very souls of men, and bringing virtues and excellencies to light, that lie hidden from the ordinary observation of the world, nay, even from themselves; and by your praise, rewarding them, like heaven, for unconscious worth? part of your character is most truly pointed out by this line,

“To beckon modest merit from the shade.”

We may admire a person who has uncommon, great, or good qualities, which we are conscious we are not endowed with; but we are more inclined to love or esteem those, who, without brighter parts, or higher excellencies than our own, attract the good opinion and affection of mankind; because we look upon these latter as a mirror, which shews us what we are capable

of arriving to, in a just and pleasing light, which makes us become, rather emulous, than envious of their fame. For my own part, I am certain, that if the Countess of C——y, and Lady O——, had been equal in their friendship and intimacy toward me, I should have always loved Lady O—— best; from my being certain that I could never be as beautiful as the first, and a fond hope that I might, some time or other, become as good and amiable as the latter.

I agree with you, that uniform and habitual sense and goodness are infinitely preferable to the most shining qualities or virtues, which do not influence the whole scope of our lives and conduct; but still I am an advocate for the failings of those, who have great and uncommon excellencies: perfection is not the lot of man, any more than happiness; and upon such extraordinary occasions, I am apt to attribute the good to the excellence of the character, and the bad to the weakness of human nature. When I observe the vanity and insincerity of Cicero, and read of the foibles and meanness of Bacon, I really feel myself affected with the most tender concern you can imagine. Melmoth says, speaking of the first character, “Perhaps, there is something in the natural mechanism of a human frame, necessary to constitute a fine genius, that is not altogether favourable to the excellencies of the heart. It is certain, at least, and let it abate our envy of uncommon parts, that great superiority of intellectual qualifications, has not often been found in conjunction with the much nobler advantages of a moral kind.”

Farewel,

FRANCES.

LETTER CCCVIII.

MY dearest comfort, not dearest bought, but dearest valued, your last letter pleased me, in a particular manner, as all yours do in general, that enter upon subjects.

Extraordinary qualities, like rare comets, strike us with a certain admiration, from the uncommonness of their appearance; but ordinary, and consequently more useful virtues, like the sun and moon, engage our affections more particularly, from their constant and daily influence upon human life. The first are certainly, within the rules of order, tho' not yet within the prescription of science; but the latter have more immediate and visible effects, which each day and season have an uniform dependance upon.

Uncommon virtues may be like great wits, who "sometimes gloriously offend;" but then these faults are not *implied* in genius, but meet indulgences, poorly begg'd by it. Persons of the most exalted merits and virtues, have been too often guilty of great vices, and irregularities; but surely, these are no farther a *mark* of the former, than as they are a *stain* upon them; and I think that a person makes but a sneaking figure, who claims indulgencies, on account of those excellencies, which ought to have precluded such an apology. This is turning the antidote to a poison.

HENRY.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCCIX.

MY dear Harry may be perfectly assured that I never did, nor will breathe the slightest hint of any thing that he desires may be kept a secret; for my chief ambition is, to be considered as his first friend and sole confidant. I own I think, with the greatest pleasure, that while you are loving me as a young woman, my mind is from your converse gaining strength, and forming itself by your example, in such a manner as will, I hope, render me worthy of your esteem, at that æra of life, when tenderness and complacency alone, unmixed with desire, shall remind you of my sex. Those are the days, in which, contrary to the general notion of women, I look forward for the most real happiness. I anticipate a future time, when the dear object of our present care, shall more than repay us for the anxiety which must attend his infant years, by performing some noble, generous act, when I shall look with transport on the son, and bless the father's virtue.

I find myself warming into a kind of rhapsody, but were it not for sentiments like these, I should not be able to support your absence: indeed it is not a common husband I lament, nor is my sorrow for our separation, of the common kind. But to the Almighty, and your will, I shall endeavour to become resigned.

Notwithstanding the frequent occasions I have had of admiring that elegance of expression, with which you say the kindest things, I still find myself not only charmed, but surprized, at every new proof, of what I was certain of before; and sure there never was any thing more polite or kinder *than those reasons that you urge, for the additional*
expence

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expençe of my being taught to draw, &c. Let the great and rich, who have it in their power to confer favours, come and learn from you the generous art of making them truly such. Adieu!

My every thing,

FRANCES.

LETTER CCCX.

Dear FANNY,

I AM just returned from the farm, and amused myself on the road, with framing a parallel, or comparison, after the manner of Plutarch, between Arthur's character and mine. I shall here set down my reflections upon this subject; in which, if I say any thing, on my own part, which may favour of vanity, you are to observe that there is nobody by, but you and me, that I speak rather from your opinion of me, than my own, and you are also to attend to this maxim of Fontenelle,

“ Il est bon de faire valoir.”

You know that universal benevolence is our distinguishing characteristic; but from what I have taken notice of in him, and contemplated in myself, I think that his virtue is *natural*, mine *philosophic*. What leads me into this distinction is, that he never was sensible of this quality in himself, 'till I first observed upon it to him; but as I have, a great while, been conscious of this turn of mind in my own breast, I suspect that the labour, with which I was obliged to improve an uncouth nature, might have impressed the sense of it more strongly on my idea; or, might not the little attention, which I have all my life remarked in the generality of mankind, toward that great moral affection, have occasioned this virtue in my own nature, to appear

appear more emphatically to my notice? but, as this observation must have been equal in him, I shall proceed upon my first distinction.

Then, his virtue must be allowed to have more *excellence*, but mine more *merit*: his is the jewel, mine the paste; both of which have equal beauty, in appearance, but tho' the first is most precious, the latter has this advantage, that broken, it may be made whole again, which the former is incapable of; for to explain the allegory, 'tis observed that the temper which is made by philosophy, is more steady, and recovers its spring better, than that which is the pure gift of nature.

'Tis certain that excellences, founded in the natural constitution, are more rare and estimable; but virtues that can stand the loss of health, the disappointments of fortune, and the temptations of the world; must be secured by sense, philosophy, and religion.

However, to return to my comparison; our virtues appear to be so far alike in this, that nature, thro' habit, has formed his principle, while philosophy, by the same habit, has improved my nature: and I flatter myself farther, that our mutual affection proves by sympathy, our nature's similar; for mere art is jealous of emulation, and constantly at war with rivals.

But in truth, nature alone, unassisted by principle, or any principle which has no foundation in our nature, can neither of them, for any length of time, support that tenor in a person's conduct, which properly frames what is stiled a character.

Here now, if you was a scholar, I could give you a quotation applicable, from Horace: which however, I shall venture to send you for the explanation of some of your learned acquaintance.

—Ego, nec studium, sine divite venâ,
Nec rude quid profit video ingenium, alterius sic
Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amicé.

Adieu,

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXI.

My dear FANNY,

Monday.

YOU know that I promised you to be in town, by the latter end of this week, but this day Mr. W. determined not to go, so I have now neither business or pretence, to carry me thither. I am very certain, that any other woman would fall into a pout at this disappointment, would be affronted, say I trifled with her, and that I was glad of any excuse for staying away, &c. But because you are a good girl now, submit with prudence and resignation to the irksome exigencies of affairs, can be sorry, without being angry, and bear disappointments without repining—(I hope I am telling truth, all this while) I shall be in Dublin by Friday night's stage, without any other business, but that of my life, love, tho' I can afford to stay with you but one week only.

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXII.

Dear FANNY,

Wednesday.

I STILL hold my resolution, (or rather purpose, for *resolution* loses its name, where inclination leads,) of being in Dublin on Friday evening, and have sent to Kilkenny, to take a place accordingly.
But,

But, my servant is just returned, and brings me word, that the stage is already full.

This was certainly a provoking disappointment to me at first thought; but, upon recollection, I am well enough pleased at it, for the following reasons. You are but a young philosopher, and frequent occasions of exercising your temper are requisite to prevent your dwindling into mere woman again. I am myself, an old Stoic, 'tis true, but the mind relaxes as well as the body, for want of exercise, and use is as necessary to maintain virtuous habits, as to acquire them.

Now, if I do not meet mortifications and disappointments, when I am from you, what can I find to exercise my philosophy, while I am with you? Therefore, since the stage has failed our expectations, as what *stage* of life does not! (you may see I am at my wits end, by this punning, and labouring under affliction by the dulness of my moral) I must cut your hopes short, by letting you know, that I shall mount my horse, and dine with you two hours after you receive this letter.

Your's,

JONATHAN HUMBUGH.

LETTER CCCXIII.

I HAVE but just time to tell my dear Fanny, that I am still alone, but rejoice in any solitude except what she occasions. I have just looked up at *Oliver Cromwell's* picture, and do now forgive him all his vices, for having, as 'tis said, established the posts throughout these kingdoms. To

“Converse familiar with the illustrious dead.”

is certainly a charming employment of time, but what employment of life can we have, without a living

living converse? And, when those we love are absent from us, how agreeable does the communication of a correspondence, supply that loss?

Adieu, my only correspondent.

HENRY.

L E T T E R CCCXIV.

Dear HARRY,

I NOT only forgive the vices of Cromwell, but bless his memory, for affording me the charming means of conversing thus with you. Fitz Osborne speaks very prettily upon this subject, in one of his letters to Cleora; but, alas! nothing he, or even you can write, will ever make me amends, for the loss of that nearer, and more intimate converse, where our eyes and looks reply to each others questions, and catch their meaning before half expressed. Some years ago, you thought as I do now.

I find that my regret at your absence, increases daily, I feel myself more miserable from our last separation, than ever I did before, from the same cause; so that neither use, time nor necessity, produce their ordinary effects upon me, in this particular. However, I am well aware, that "short absences urge sweet return," between those who truly love; but, I fear the frequency of them, may, at length abate the tender sensations, they at first occasioned, in you, whose steady philosophy is for ever on its guard, against any thing which looks like weakness. But enough of this subject; for my repinings will not, alas! cannot remedy it.

Adieu!

FRANCES.

LETTER CCCXV.

YOU wrong me much, by saying that my philosophy is on its guard against every tenderness; no man indulges himself more in fond affections, than I have always done. I did so at first, from inclination, because I found it pleasant; and next, from principle, because I thought it virtuous: Whenever I have seem'd to want that tenderness, it was owing, either to my apprehension, that the appearance of it, or the indulging it too far, might in some sort, injure some more interesting concern; or that perhaps, I might have thought the person at that time, not the proper object of tenderness. And while there are various passions in the human breast, each will be excited in its turn, according as varying occasions shall call them forth.

Fear not that frequent absence may at length create indifference; for present, or absent, no person, thing, or circumstance, can ever make me love you less, or even cease to love you better, if possible, except yourself. Let but your cleverness, and sure 'tis worth exerting, be but equal to my love and constancy, which it does by no means naturally fall short of, and this world cannot produce a more happy pair.

Adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXVI.

I HAVE often had reason to complain of your provoking philosophic calmness, but I think, never more than now. When I tell you how tenderly and sincerely I lament your absence, you answer me with saying, that if I was to exert some
degree

degree of *cleverness*, we should be the happiest pair in the world. Now pray, Mr *Stoic*, what kind of *cleverness* is it, that will transport me to Maidenhall, or bring you back to Dublin? For I have never known, nor do I desire to know happiness, thro' any other medium, than my dearest Harry's presence. You may say perhaps, that this same *cleverness* you talk so much of, should render me easy in a state of separation; but if you think so, I positively affirm that you are wholly *illiterate*, and are only a philosopher for the stars. I will appeal to any man but an astronomer, if your speaking in this very composed strain, is not an high affront to me; and whether the being separated from the only person we love in this world, is compatible with happiness, or even with ease.

“ But if the pangs of absence you had known,

“ You'd feel my real anguish by your own.”

Even when you are with me, I do not enjoy the happiness I ought, from my frequent thoughts upon the melancholic subject of our parting. I have often confessed this weakness to you, but now remind you of it, in order to account for what has, and may sometimes again, appear unaccountable in my manner: I know you have often been surprized at my growing suddenly grave, when I have been just before, in the highest flow of spirits; my countenance has been o'ercast, and my eyes filled with tears; I have been ashamed to assign the cause, or perhaps you have not asked it; but attributed the change to the caprice of my temper, or to the want of *cleverness*, which you inculcate so frequently. In short, you are not yet acquainted with my heart, nor is it possible for you to conceive the romantic tenderness of my weak nature. You are a great, big, strong man, and your mind is proportioned to your body; while mine, by the same rule, sympathizes

thizes with the slightness and diminutiveness of my frame. So pray, Mr. *Giant*, talk no more to Mrs. *Emmet*, of exerting strength of mind, unless you can teach her, at the same time, "by taking thought, to add a cubit to her stature."

Adieu, my dear *Steick*, you'll excuse bad spelling in a woman.

FRANCES.

LETTER CCCXVII.

I RECEIVED my dear Harry's mandate this morning, and need I tell you how willingly I obey? I ran to Mrs C——, to shew your letter; she immediately accepted of your invitation, and will accompany me to morrow. She drank tea with me this evening, and says she had pack'd up all her things, before dinner, while I think I am farther from being ready, than I was when I received your letter; for I can so little compose the transport of my spirits, at the thoughts of my approaching happiness; that I have done nothing, but pack and unpack, mistake my keys, and confuse my wardrobe, ever since; so that I am afraid I shall carry but a very heterogeneous dress along with me: But I insist upon your promise, that we shall see no manner of company at your house.

I accept of this invitation, as the highest compliment you could possibly pay me, by preferring my company to your too much beloved, tho' well employed solitude; and like Adam, before the creation of Eve, found yourself but half blessed in paradise. But Heaven forbid, that our society should be attended with consequences like theirs, or that the serpent should, in any shape, have power to destroy our happiness, tho' it may, perhaps, occasion as much envy in certain evil spirits, as that of
our

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our first parents; but this I am secure of, that no vain desire of wandering from thy presence, my scene of bliss, shall ever make us wretched.

'Till I have the happiness of being restored to that, Adieu, my dearest Harry.

FRANCES.

LETTER CCCXVIII.

Dear FANNY,

Kilkenny.

OUR assizes pass'd off more quietly than I expected. We have had no strife, but what my happy privileges exempt me from; for being a person of no manner of consequence, I can avoid drinking, without being called to account for it.

The female Sampson is here, and I called in this night to see her. There is nothing but slight in her performances, tho' they have really the appearance of Herculean strength. I can't avoid offering a paradox here, by saying, that if they were less *surprising*, they would be more *extraordinary*; for there have been many instances of persons who have exceeded the ordinary powers of man; some one way, some another; and while their actions preserved the bounds of credibility, they constituted what is properly stiled a wonder; but when once they exceed natural possibility, they fall into the class of miracles; and our faith failing us, the whole excellence is justly attributed to deception, chicanery, or art.

Adieu,

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXIX.

Dear FANNY,

Leighlin-Bridge.

I WAS tired of town, and yet left it with regret : I long'd to get home, and yet do not think with so much pleasure of seeing Maidenhall, as I imagined I should. The inconsistencies of human nature !

I find that we have made a great miscalculation, with regard to the difference of age, requisite between man and wife : You affirmed that the husband should be at least ten years older ; and as I always placed an implicit faith in your aphorisms, without ever enquiring into the philosophy of the matter, I quietly acquiesced in the *ratio* between us ; but I have unluckily met with a treatise here, to-day, which shews me the error of your computation. It is stiled *OEconomia Naturæ*, the author R. Ruffel, M. D. F. R. S.

In his sixth chapter, speaking of the most perfect state of the sexes, he fixes men at thirty-five, and women at forty-five ; at which periods, he asserts the declension of their native vigour to begin : Therefore, to observe this rule of proportion exactly, I must keep myself at a stand, from the date of this letter, 'till we are able to meet again, upon more equal terms ; which, in the ordinary course of nature, must be about twenty years hence : But proper regimen may bring that period to pass, within a much shorter time ; late hours, at night and morning, taking advice oftner than physick, *apprehending* yourself ill, when alone, and *mis-apprehending* yourself well, when in company, indolence and inactivity, fretting at the awkwardness and carelessness of servants, &c. will enable us, in a much shorter time, to re-enter the lists, upon *cæteris paribus* terms.

This

This fancy has brought a certain arithmetical quibble to my mind, that I have somewhere met with, which proposes that a man, on the day of marriage, shall be thrice as old as his wife, but at the end of a certain given number of years, he shall be but twice her age. Now I suppose, upon this diminution of *Ratio's* that they might come to an equality at last.*

Adieu, my dearest Fanny, thou best loved mistress, and most esteemed wife; thou only object, which when present, "increased appetite by what " it fed on," and in absence, created desire of fruition, as if not enjoyed. But lest, these quaint expressions should incline you to suspect, that I rather play the poet, than express the lover; I shall, in plainer terms, assure you, that my heart dictates more fondly than my fancy can indite; and that never woman was more tenderly beloved, or more sincerely esteemed, than you have ever been, by one who comprehends the fondest titles of lover and of friend, in the more sacred character of an

Affectionate husband.

HENRY.

* This problem may be explained by the following algebraic equation. Wife=15. husband=45. $45=15 \times 3$. $15+15=30$. $45+15=60$. $60=30 \times 2$.

LETTER CCCXX.

My dear FANNY,

Dublin.

MORAL philosophers say, that a man should, every night recollect after what manner he had spent the day, so as to call himself to account for any part of it mispent, in order to amend his life, for the future. There is somewhat like this self-examination, in the constant method I observe when I am absent from you, in rendering you a diary every post, after what manner, and in what company, I pass my *exile*.

This morning I walked out to Bradley's villa, or Villakin, as Swift more aptly terms such suburban recesses, and I was surprized to see such a string of houses as have been built along the road, since I passed last that way. Honest Abraham, after his plain, hospitable manner, cry'd, "Friend Henry, "you are welcome to the country;" to which I replied, "Friend Abraham, thou art welcome to "the town;" for in reality the city has communicated itself to the country, by a chain, like electricity;* so that I am at a loss, whether one may stile this retreat a *rus in urbe*, or an *urbs in rure*.

The antient mythologists have framed a fable, that Astræa had forsaken the city, and printed her last footsteps in the country; upon which hint, I suppose that the poets have stiled Liberty the mountain nymph. One might imagine that our citizens were in pursuit of these goddesses, who are close confederates; for in a short time, I dare say, they

* Suppose a chain of men in contact, for an hundred miles; if the first person be electrified, the last one shall receive the shock, at the same instant; or, if there was a cord extended so far, held by a man at each end, the same effect would follow.

will

will have extended their line as far as the Wicklow mountains: And, as the prophesied time of the *gathering in of nations*, is not far off, this period seems to be already begun, by the connecting of counties together.

But this extravagance methinks, should be restrained by the legislature, upon this political hint from history, That when a denison of Rome, became a citizen of the world, that empire grew unwieldy, *Ruit mole sua*, and was soon after overwhelmed, like the tower of Babel, by the confusion of tongues. At least, this is the moral that Sheridan would extract, from this portion of history; as he makes the precision of language the chief bulwark of a state. However, I have a good opinion of his treatise on British education, tho' I have been tempted to make a ludicrous allusion to it, upon this occasion.

Friend Abraham seemed, in his manners, to partake of this *concatenation* of situation; for he received me with all the hospitality of a country squire, but left me at liberty, with regard to wine, as citizens generally do. There is no nation in the world, that is so remarkably guilty of the unnatural absurdity of pressing to drink, as this kingdom; for which reason, I think that we may stile this mistaken piece of hospitality an *Irish blunder*. The most unpardonable kind of rape is, that which is committed upon the understanding; because it is a vice to which the ravisher can have no manner of temptation, and from which the injured person can possibly receive neither advantage or pleasure.

It is fabled that some of the scoundrels of the Pantheon had violated a maid; upon which the victim prayed to be transformed into such a creature as might render her misfortune no sort of disgrace to her; and on this solicitation, she had the satisfaction to find her sex immediately assume the

masculine gender. I think that the same poetical justice should metamorphose a drunken person into a hog.

Farewel,

HENRY.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCCXXI.

Dear FANNY,

YOU complain that you are deprived of the middle post, by the awkwardness of my situation, and immediately you see, I have overcome that difficulty, by your receiving this on Wednesday; but do you know how I contrive it? Even by carrying this letter myself to Kilcullen bridge. You know my old way. always to give warning. "The picture friend dismissed, &c." and I shall dine with you in about three hours, after you receive this.

The account of your illness, joined to my charming dream or vision, I don't know which to call it, have rendered me so impatient to see you, that I am resolved to hazard the *coute qui coute*, for that pleasure. I shall steal to you *incog*, and keep close quarters, 'till I have settled my affairs. If I am to be in confinement, I chuse to make you my goaler.

My reasons for thus advising you before hand, are, that I was afraid the surprize of seeing me so unexpectedly, and not knowing upon what terms I came up to Dublin, might have too sudden an effect upon you, in your present situation. I thought also, that if you should receive this letter, an hour or two before I arrived, you would have that hour or two's pleasure of expectation. Lastly, I was
- afraid

afraid you might have been gone to dine abroad,
and tho' no-body loves to be alone better than I,
yet I chuse rather to be *alone with you*.

Adieu !

Your fond and faithful husband,

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXXII.

Dear FANNY, Maidenhall, Sept. 4, 1754.

LET this piece of galantry be received as a truth, that I actually kept the bearer five days, to wait 'till my peaches and nectarines should grow ripe : But lest I should detain him 'till next summer, for that purpose, I have at length dispatched him with the most forward fruit I could collect from my walls. I desire that you would not judge them of a bad kind, from their present flavour, for there is a certain crisis in all things, as well as virtue,

Quos ultra, citraque, nequit consistere rectum.

And *fruits* both natural and metaphorical, that ripen before their time, are observed still to retain the rawness of prematurity, or protracted beyond their date, betray the vapidity of a latter season. You know the characteristic of a page's wit, *pert at fourteen, and dull at forty*, and with regard to those, whose intellects mature but slowly, the expression of a *green old-age*, is a most apt description.

The *prime* of life is the critical season, and every thing analogous to it, must certainly yield the most agreeable flavour. I do not play this *Jeu d'Esprit* merely to exercise that talent, but to shew you that even matrimony has not abated my galantry toward you, so far as to prevent me from behaving or

speaking to you as a lover; and be assured that whenever I fail to act up to that gay character, it is only when my esteem for your sense, chastens my fondness for your person.

My leg is perfectly well now, thanks to the care of my three nurse-tenders, at Old Court; in return for which I have sent Miss Cave, a damask table cloth, of my own composition intirely, from the sowing to bleaching; and to Miss Reddin, some lawn of the same manufacture; but as for my *Æglé*, *huic aliud mercedis erit*. I have sent you two "*scraps*" of Latin to puzzle your vicar."

I behaved to Will like a fellow traveller on our journey, and have not employed him in the least servile office, since he came hither. I look upon him as your servant, not mine, and upon that account have treated him as civilly as a *fellow-servant*. I have a pleasure in behaving and speaking to you, after this manner, for indeed, never woman had, at the same time, in the same person, so fond a husband, and so galant a lover; in both of which characters I subscribe myself, my dearest life,

Your's for life.

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXXIII.

Old-Court.

I Received my dearest Harry's too genteel letter. You often distress me.—After I have exerted my utmost powers to repay the kindness of your actions, I find myself often remaining still a debtor, for the politeness of your expressions.

You ought never to have married. A friend and a mistress, was the plan of life for you. Your
sincerity

sincerity and galantry would be sufficient work for two persons to render justice to. My utmost endeavours are too faint, to make suitable returns to both : unless, like Heaven, you accept a perfect will, for an imperfect deed. You may say, that the hint I have given here, comes somewhat too late, for the present ; but you should never have had it else. However, I may die, and I would warn you against a second marriage. Indeed my Harry, second marriages are wicked things ; 'tis counteracting the designs of Providence, for if it had thought proper to continue us in a state of wedlock, it would not have dissolved the union.

If you had seen me this morning with Will, you would have thought me rather, his *fellow servant* ; for I sat in the kitchen an hour after he came in, asking him questions about dear Maidenhall, what sort of servants you have there, what kind of house you keep, whether your uncle, or any of the rest of your family, seem to suspect our marriage, &c. &c.

I have tasted your fruit, and thought the flavour most delicious ; perhaps it was like Eve, because it was forbidden. Oh my dearest Adam, how wretched has this accidental thought rendered me this instant ! lest your fondness for me should ever be the occasion of your being expelled from that delightful Eden. The only comfort I have, upon this reflection is, that it was not my fault, but rather owing to my having resisted stronger temptations, than that unhappy woman yielded to.

Your Latin sentences always vex me. I feel a sort of disappointment, as if a line was blotted ; or a certain impatience, such as curious people are affected with, upon observing a whisper in company ; straining to listen, and longing to know what it was about. I pray you, good Mr. Bays, *pen me no more of your whispers*, but speak out for the future.

Adieu, my dear *Silenus*; you may see by this hint, that all your learning is not able to puzzle the erudition of my worthy vicar.

FRANCES.

P. S. Upon looking over this letter, I find I have been *calling you names*, from beginning to ending.

LETTER CCCXXIV.

My dear FANNY,

THESE three or four days journeying have fatigued me greatly, as I have lain by so long; besides the weather has been extremely warm. I think I may well pass for an hero now, according to the classical expression, *fatiens pulveris, atque solis*, one who can endure dust and heat.

I was struck on Thursday last, with *un coup de soleil*, which gave me an head-ach for twelve hours: You know that I had received *un coup de lune* before, so that I am now a fit tenant, either for *Bedlam* or *Parnassus*.

“ And thin partitions do the bounds divide.”

The brain also, is parted into two cells, or *principalities*; the *sinicput* we will assign to madness, as folly is ever forward; and the *occiput* to genius, because merit is always backward: So that a person may very well be, or wit or bedlamite, as either the * *brother* or *sister* shall assume their departments; and their acting in conjunction, makes him a poet. In allusion to this distinction, we may observe upon Biceps Parnassus, that it has one pinnacle sacred to Apollo, and the other dedicated to Bacchus equal-

* Phœbus and Diana, whose other appellation was Luna.

ly

Iy divided between wit and rage; from which hint I suppose was derived the proverb, *parum vini acuit ingenium*. You must know that this same *parum* is a certain measure among the antients, which the commentators have not precisely defined: I understand it to be a pint, but some dictionaries render it a quart, while others construe it into three pints. But let the *quam unum sufficit* be what it may, a genius is the first thing required, for it is not every one who bears the Thrysus † that is inspired by Bacchus.

Adieu!

† A javelin dressed up with ivy leaves, carried in the Bacchanalian processions.

LETTER CCCXXV.

IT gives me sincere concern that you still continue ill. Curse on Eve, who intailed that curse upon your helpless sex: However, to make you some amends for this misfortune, Tiresias of old, determin'd a certain point in your favour; any school-boy can tell you the story.

What sympathy between us! I never had so severe a cholic in my life, as I had all that day you complain of. While a part of me is a part of you, that racking disorder must be the consequence; for it has become at length, so much a piece of my frame, that one may as well think to make a crooked nose straight by physick as to rescue my constitution from this malady, by the power of medicine. Such torment as I suffer was never felt but twice before; the first time, when Jonas was kicking the guts of the poor whale about, to make it cast him up again; and the second, when some antient usurer, I forget his name, had his thirst of gain quenched, by having some molten gold poured down his throat.

Adieu, my charming woman, and

“ If there be yet another name more free,

“ More fond than *husband*, make me that to thee.”

Believe me that I never received more pleasure; in my life, from your correspondence, than I have done since our last parting, except that article of your letter where you mention your illness. The saying, upon the failure of our tickets, *The worse luck now, &c.* was in a different stile from your usual despondency. I am in hopes of making a philosopher of you in time, and with that hope, I hope also, that you may have every day less occasion for the trial.

I send you a letter I received last post, from Mr. —, to shew you, that is one happy particular, with regard to your merit, all men of sense think as I do.

Farewel,

H E N R Y.

L E T T E R CCCXXVI.

My FANNY,

AFTER I had sealed my former letter, this morning I could not rest easy, at not having heard from you by last post. I was certain that you would not have neglected it, if you had not been ill. Upon which I sent to search the post-office, which gave me but little relief; tho' I did find a letter there, as it mentions the hazardous state you are in. I do intreat that you will attend to your present condition; and make a difference between your manner of living, when with child, and when not; both with regard to hours, food, quantity, and quality. Consider, that a woman during her lying-in, is in a high fever, and should therefore

therefore take especial care to preserve the temper of her blood, as cool as possible, while she is advancing toward that crisis. Reflect constantly upon this moral, that *a double duty requires a double diligence.*

An execution came down this day, against our friend Mr. Cosby, at the suit of Mrs. S—. You may remember the story, he had made her a present of an hundred pounds, and afterwards passed his bond to her for the money, upon her complaining that she could not get a sufficient security for it. What baseness and ingratitude in this world! Oh live, for my sake! I shall become a second Timon, should you leave me alone!

Adieu!

HENRY.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCCXXVII.

Dear HARRY,

IT gives me great pleasure to hear that you and our dear child, are with our worthy friend at the farm. You taste at once pure air and pure friendship, the highest *rural* enjoyments; for I believe that the latter, any more than the former, is not to be met with in populous cities. Our little animal is as yet, only capable of receiving benefit from the first, but I hope that he will live to have as just a *sense* of Mr. Newburgh's virtues, as his father, and as high a *respect* for them, as his mother. I fancy I see him scampering round the fields, grasping at butterflies; and extending the prospect thro' a series of years, I find the pursuit continued, not improved, after the higher trisles of his *graver*, but not *wiser* age. His mistaking every place

place that was not Dublin, for Danesfort, or Maidenhall, as those are the only country seats he ever saw, was extremely natural. The dear fellow! as his knowledge increases, he will find the world growing larger, but as his virtue improves he will think it every day, diminishing to a point. My blessing to him, and pray say every thing for me to your agreeable hosts, that you think I would say, if I could express my gratitude for their kindness toward him.

I am undone for want of books; I wish you could contrive to send me some. This is the season for poetry, the luxuriant beauties of nature, seem now to warrant the most romantic description, and give the air of truth to fiction. This used to be our favourite month; I still retain a fondness for it, and wish, if possible, more ardently for your company, at this season of the year, than any other; and yet you do not speak of coming to me. Farewel, and accept as your due, the sincerest love and duty, from your faithful and affectionate wife.

FRANCES.

LETTER CCCXXVIII.

The Farm.

YOUR letter was extremely pretty, nay more, that is, it was *your* letter. Arthur would read it, he was not content with hearing it. When he observed the smallness of the type, he wished for microscopic eyes. However, he made a shift to go thro' it, with the help of spectacles, tho' the ink was so pale, that Mrs. Newburgh, who looked over him, called it the meer *ghost* of a letter: no *says he*, after his happy manner of expression, 'tis *the very spirit of writing*. He then declared, that
he

he liked your letters so much better than mine, in the * Series, that he went thro' the two volumes a second time, first looking for the sign Frances, as one does in the Spectators, for the marks C.L.I.O. * * * * * Mrs. N—— was charmed with your letter also; however, in her lively way, she excepted to the close of it; those poor-spirited expressions of love, duty, &c. says she, are apt to make husbands vain and domineering. Your distinguishing between my *sense* of Arthur's virtues, and only saying your *respect* for them, was perfectly pretty and polite, and was much observed upon here. It was indeed, agreeable to your modesty, but not to your merit.

Adieu,

HENRY.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCCXXIX.

My dearest HENRY,

I CANNOT say that I ever met with a severer shock than your last letter gave me. I am far from being sanguine in my expectations; yet from my thorough knowledge of your sense and virtue, I had persuaded myself that you could not fail of success, with souls allied to yours, by kindred merits. But that worse than Lucifer, that unprovoked, untempted fiend, has marred the flattering prospect, and rooted up the last poor twig of hope. Yet, notwithstanding this cruel outrage on your character, I think, that your going to England immediately, is the only expedient left to

* The first edition.

vindicate yourself, and regain your intetrest. You cannot expect any thing here, from lukewarm friends, and potent enemies.

I can now account for Mrs. D——'s letter, which surprized me much at first, and for your seeming indifference about going to England; which, pardon me, I attributed before to your natural indolence. But I have not words sufficient now, to express my gratitude for your tenderness, in concealing this and every other disagreeable event, as long as possible, from my too unphilosophic heart.

I was attacked two days ago with a severe disorder in my stomach, attended with an uncommon heaviness and heat: I apprehended I was taking a fever, and was quite resigned; but I will struggle with it now; I would not, like a coward, quit my friend in distress; but by patiently partaking, endeavour to alleviate his misfortunes, who has been the blessed second cause, of all the happiness that I have ever known.

“ Thy rise of fortune did I only wed,
 “ From its decline, determin'd to recede?
 “ Did I but purpose to embark with thee,
 “ On the smooth surface of a summer's sea,
 “ Where gentle zephyrs play in prosperous
 “ gales,
 “ And fortune's favours fill the swelling sails;
 “ But would forsake the ship, and make the
 “ shore,
 “ When the winds bellow, and the tempests
 “ roar?
 “ No, Henry, no! one sacred knot has ty'd,
 “ Our loves, one destiny our lives shall
 “ guide,
 “ Nor wild, nor deep, our common way
 “ divide.”

Amen!

FRANCES.

H I A T U S.

L E T T E R CCCXXX.

Déar FANNY,

MR. — has run away from his wife, and lodges in some garret, incog. He has not gone near his office this fortnight, for fear of meeting her. He visits every evening at —, and passes his time between between tears and curses. He says, that he has been these several years endeavouring to wean her from the beastly vice of drinking; but finding it in vain, he used to spend most of his time abroad; which led him into expences that he could ill afford; therefore he has been obliged to live much at home, of late; and says, that her temper is grown so diabolical, that it is impossible to describe the perverseness of it; insomuch, that he thinks, if he had staid a quarter of an hour longer in his house, he must have been tempted to throw her or himself out of the window.

He says, that he had endeavoured to conceal the whole of her behaviour from the world, as long as he could, in hopes of her being in time, reclaimed to a proper sense of decency and duty; and has often assumed the appearance of ease and fondness, while his heart was aching and resenting. Which may reconcile the difference of our opinions upon this couple, while we held any intercourse with them. I said, from *her* behaviour, he must abominate her; and you said, that from *his*, he must be fond of her.

He was a kind and indulgent husband, and was ~~not aware~~, that there are certain base natures, which ~~not deserving~~ favours before hand, are sure to ~~undeserve~~, the more they receive; whom gene-
rosity

rosity renders ungrateful, kindness unkind, and indulgence but constantly prepares more work for itself: whose uncouth tempers weary the bravest spirits into tameness, and treat them after with contempt, for their submission. Nor had the wretched woman herself sense enough to know, that aversion is made up of repeated disgusts, and that love and esteem may recover from resentment, but never from aversion. And should grace hereafter inspire her with reformation, her future merits would be but bringing fuel to a flame extinct: a lifeless heap, without warmth or action. She found him willing to be reconciled, after many provocations, and concluding it would be always so, indulged her ill temper and perverseness, without reserve; depending upon her being still able to whistle him into tune, when she should herself grow weary of the discord. Thus the easiness of his temper, has at length, rendered her more wretched, than she would have been, even if he had been as perverse as herself, from the beginning.

Surely a bad wife is the devil's revenge against matrimony; and a brothel broil not half so indelicate, as the marriage strife. Not but that I think, a little briskness may be necessary sometimes, between man and wife, like winds which disperse stagnating humours: or may they not be considered as *Episodes*, which serves to relieve the tediousness of the *Main Action*?

Adieu,

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXXXI.

Dear FANNY,

I CANNOT go to you to-day as I designed, but to-morrow I shall certainly dine with you, I send you *The Plurality of Worlds*, which, tho' in translated, will please and instruct you. I would engage to teach the whole science of astronomy, in a fortnight's time, to an intelligent girl of fifteen years old, by explaining it in the easy familiar manner, that Fontenelle does in this treatise. In truth, I have always found the dogmatical terms more difficult to comprehend, than the sense or meaning of the arts or sciences themselves.

Philosophers have always had a vain affectation of making learning a mystery, in order to raise themselves high in the opinion of the vulgar; by which means many studies are rendered abstruse, by scholastic precisions, that would be perfectly intelligible without them. A mathematician will puzzle you in conic sections, with circles, ellipses, hyperbola's, parabola's, &c. all which diagrams a grocer's apprentice performs every day in breaking up a sugar loaf.

Epictetus, in his 12th chapter on Disputation, is very angry at the generality of philosophers, who affect technical terms too much; which render science difficult and unintelligible to the illiterate. Socrates's address was admirable in this particular, who in the plainest stile and most simple manner, without affirming any thing, could make the most ignorant peasant instruct himself in the sublimest truths.

Indeed *learning* is a difficult thing, but sense and reason are easy; and in truth, the generality of people need not be so ignorant as they are, if philosophers would descend a little from their mysterious

rious heights, and according to the proverb,
*while they think with the wise, would talk with the
vulgar.*

Farewel,

HENRY.

L E T T E R. CCCXXXII.

Dear FANNY,

I SEND you two letters inclosed, which mention you, I am fond of communicating any compliment from my friends toward you; and in truth, I am sensible every day, of a more polite galantry for you, than I was inspired with when I first solicited your virgin sacrifice; and indeed I foresee nothing but death, which can prevent my loving you with greater affection, even than I do at present, in your grand climacteric:

“When thinking of thy charming youth

“I’ll love thee o’er again in age.”

While you shall answer me like your favourite Cowley,

“Antient person, as thou art,”

“Antient person of my heart.”

In short, there never was a soul formed in France, with more galantry than mine, but as phlegmatic as a Dutch tobacconist’s, where my affections are not engaged. I think, saving his wit, I resemble Swift in this particular, whose manners were grave and sequester’d, rough and unpolished in his address, by nature a satyrist, rather than panegyrist, and more the philosopher than the lover: but, in all his writings to Stella, the four academic disappears, and one would imagine he had been educated in a court: I mean, to avoid equivocation, the court of Augustus. Let us teach the slaves of
Hymen,

Hymen, what it is to be free; and shew them, that as love inspirits duty, duty in return gives constancy to love. I have, thanks to your worth, already got my lesson *by heart*, and I much hope that yours is not yet to learn. Farewel, my charming Iphigenia, and believe me to be your inspired

CYMON.

L E T T E R CCCXXXIII.

Dear FANNY,

Stradbally-Hall.

I HAVE got so far on my journey, having bought a horse for my servant at Smithfield yesterday. He is the most curious little nag you ever saw, and what is extraordinary, Richard chose him among a dozen. It is a mankeen in *miniature*, and you know he is himself a gag in *magnitude*. It was drole to see the fellow walking thro' the street, with a horse between his legs. I have been paid his price, in laughing at the couple already. He does not mount by the stirrup, but seats himself side-ways, like a woman; and then ballancing with his whip, as if he was riding the *London Taylor*, throws himself across the saddle with great *equilibre*. But in truth, he has no occasion for a saddle, for, *if it was not for the name of a horse, &c.* If he had been equerry to Procrustes*, he would certainly have cut off half a yard of his legs, at least. I often wished they had been made like a shoemaker's measure, to slide in, according to the size one wanted to fit. I tried several experiments on my journey, to accommodate the disproportion between man and horse. At

* He was a tyrant, who had a certain bed, which he used to adapt his captives to, by curtailing or extending their length.

first.

first, I made Richard lead him, as you have seen dogs harnessed sometimes; but the horse used to run giddily between his legs, and throw the poor fellow down. I then seated him like a Mandarin, with his legs crossed under him; but Houhnymn, like all little animals, was too fiery for such *manège*. At last, I cropt his ears, shorn his mane, pared his hoofs, and dock'd his tail; then I got his rider close shaved, clipp'd his nails, struck off a heel-tap from each of his boots, and took my pocket book out of the valise; by which means I lighten'd them both sufficiently, to come through the journey tolerably well, only stopping now and then at some plashees of water, till Richard lifted him over. In short, the whole equestrian figure seemed to reverse the fable, for it was *le mouton en labour of the mountain*.

In one of your late letters, you say, that you relieve absence by being silly: you may see by this letter, that I have taken the same method also: but do not, like withered figs, deem mirth to be folly: the politest people think differently; for Rire is French philosophy: 'tis also the moral of the court of Comus, where you are. Long may their cheerfulness remain, happy pair! But theirs is a stream from a still springing source; ours, like summer showers, tho' refreshing, rare!

Adieu,

HENRY.

L E T T E R CCCXXXIV.

Dear HARRY,

THOUGH the scene you passed through at B——, must have been very disagreeable, I heartily rejoice at your having seen Mr. ——, merely because you stand now, acquitted to yourself. For though we cannot command events, 'tis winning half, to be able to justify ones own conduct. Is there not something particular in your fate, that as soon as ever you have any business material to yourself, to transact with any one, they immediately begin to doat or die? Mr. —— is the fourth instance, and you have had two of each within this year. In short, you are a person not only singular in yourself, but also in the peculiarities which happen to you every day. Oh! that to compleat the singularity of your *history*, fortune would adopt you,—on account of your merits! I shall say no more, I would not wish to sink your spirits, and I find it impossible to raise my own.

With fondness and impatience, I expect and wish for your return,

“Thou my souls joy! whate’er my sorrows be,
“They cease, or vanish on beholding thee.”

Adieu, thou best, of the best character in life,
adieu my husband.

FRANCES.

L E T T E R CCCXXXV.

Dear FANNY,

I WOULD wait upon you to day, but that I have been extremely ill these two days past. How shall I acquaint you of my disorder with any politeness? It was what the astrologers would stile
being

being under the influence of the *crab ascendant*, which guides all motions *retrograde*; and disease was carrying me off, as Cacus used to steal the oxen.*

I am, thank God, perfectly at ease to day, but too weak to travel: besides, leaving a house as soon as one is well, is as beggarly a thing, as the moment one has dined. However, as you expected me this day, I think proper to make my apology, lest you should be alarmed. You see of what consequence I think myself, which you will not be surprized at, after you have read the three inclosed articles, that I have cut out from the last news paper; and which give me reason to believe, that *the Lord-like creature* may recover his former dignity again. You will find by the verses, that the Sapphic age is now returned, when women woo and sue in vain; and by the advertisements, that even a hackney coachman has forbid your whole sex, *woman or women*, to honour themselves with the illustrious name of Scully. *Assume my name*. In answer to which; you see that some vain, ambitious fair one, has proclaimed her honour to the world, and threatens to institute a suit *to remedy this, and other grievances*, which, in other words is, to be restored to her conjugal rights, in the arms of her dear, faithless hackney coachman; the being deprived of which happiness, she publicly declares to be an intolerable *grievance*.

Adieu!

HENRY.

* He used to draw them backward by the tail, to prevent their being traced.

LETTER CCCXXXVI.

Dear FANNY,

YOU are too desponding about our election, and the colleagues here, are not more heroic; but as for my part, I shall keep up my spirit till the trial is over; and nothing then shall abate it, but success; for I will double it upon a defeat. If I cannot be Hercules I will be Antæus.

For some months past I have been obliged to live in a sort of familiar converse, among our *voters*; and I have seen more of the knavery, meanness, and insincerity of the lower class of mankind, in that short time, than I had ever experienced, or would even suffer myself to imagine, in my whole life before. This has brought me to suspect, that there may possibly be something more in being *well-born*, than I used generally to attribute to it. In all my future dealings with the world, I shall *beware of the dunghill*.

We are most cordially dull here, without Mrs. — and you. I always thought the best furnished house looked naked, without a woman; the most elegant feast, like a campaign mess; and a bolster with but one pillow; like a sick man's couch. Oh haste, and restore us to ourselves, our home, our bed and board!

Adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXXXVII.

Dear FANNY,

WHEN I came here, I found clerks employed, to make out some forty copies of two late letters of mine to Mr. —. I never designed them

them for public view, or I would have wrote them more correctly; nay, I thought so little about them, that I did not even shew them to you, who was in the house when I wrote. He thinks they will do him service, but I can't see how; except by shewing his candidness, in publishing reproofs against himself. as well as against his enemies.

However, there is a pleasure in exciting gratitude; I have done better things for other people, who have either appeared insensible at the time, or seemed to have forgot them immediately after. But this shall never discourage me; I have a way of paying myself before-hand. 'Tis usury to expect gratitude.

I have had bad weather, ever since I left your *latitude*. The thickest mist here, these three days, that ever I saw. Pray how did your *air without fog* behave itself? But this day is perfectly clear, for the violence of last night's storm, has thoroughly purged the air. There was a very hurricane all night, and the wind ceased to blow toward morning, only, as it seemed to me, because it was out of breath. I am glad to find the packets had safely arrived before it, because they have brought us good news: that is, *No news*. Our fears at least, about the two great deaths, are over. *Vivat Rex!*

Amen and adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXXXVIII.

My dear FANNY,

ALL friends here are well. *My* cholic, for from its peculiarity I may call it *mine*, was my constant companion through the journey. Among the

the *singularities* which you imputed to me, in a late letter, you may class this extraordinary disorder, which no regimen can keep off, nor no irregularity bring on; which comes and goes, *ex mero mo/u*, like ideas, which arise and vanish in the memory, without the minds being able to account for their adduction, or remotion.

Mr. — and his wife are here. I never saw her before; she is a very agreeable kind of woman; neither handsome or genteel; but she has more than painting or statuary can express. I have been long of opinion, that good humour, and amiableness of temper, are infinitely preferable to beauty, or even to sense; if sense can be, which I deny, without them.

I heard a piece of news here, Mrs. — has been obliged to sell part, and deposit the rest of her jewels, to answer a pressing demand, A Play Debt! she was too old and homely to discharge it otherways. Her age and person saved her morals.

My sincere compliments to Mr. and Mrs. —, and love to Miss in her Teens,

Adieu!

HENRY.

L E T T E R CCCXXXIX.

Dear FANNY,

YOUR opinion that Mr. —'s uneasiness at his wife's absence, is owing to his fondness for her, I hope is just; but there is such a thing as being helpless and dissatisfied at being left alone, though we have no great affection for the object of society, when present: and this I do suspect, from my knowledge both of the husband and wife, to be really the present case. Use has a sovereign power

power over the mind, and the effect is strongest where ideas are fewest : many persons go abroad often, by way of not staying at home, while others stay at home, only because they will not be at the trouble of going abroad ; so that from the mere force of habit, some go out without pleasure, while others stay within, without enjoyment : and we may sometimes imagine, that this man diverts himself one way, and that another, and may be mistaken in both. I have known people sit up half their nights, without the least indulgence in the excess ; but merely from an aversion of going to bed, have sat yawning and stretching themselves into convulsions ; or snored for an hour or two in their chairs, before they could be prevailed on to call for their night caps. The caprices of human nature are infinite ; how few ways to be right, and how many to be wrong !

Farewel,

HENRY.

HIATUS.

LETTER CCCXL.

MY dearest Harry is, I hope, before this, convinced of his injustice, in accusing me of neglect : when I was most immersed in the frolick and gaiety of youth, I never was fool enough to give up the rational happiness I received from his correspondence, for any inferior amusement, but have declined many parties, stiled of pleasure, for the real one of *conversing* with him ; for so I call writing to those we love. Then what could tempt me to neglect it now ? when every thought and tender affection of my heart is dedicated to him and his dear children, who by partaking, increase,
 6 rather

rather than lessen that tendernefs. 'Tis highly probable that I may not get a messenger to carry this letter to the post, yet I write for the hazard, and to satisfy a fondnefs.

From what you hint, I hope your affairs will soon be accommodated; at least in fuch a way, as may put it in your power to make, even a small provision, for that wife, and those children you fo truly love. We have great reason to be thankful for the happy difpofition of our dear boy. Indeed there cannot be a better mind, in fo much youth: to fum up all, he is my own Harry's epitome: His delicate unflattering tendernefs, hourly recalls the image of his much loved father; though fure I need not memento's, to bring you to my mind, who are never abfent from my fond idea: but too conftant attention, like too intently gazing, may fometimes make us lofe the object of our contemplation, and our dear Hal is the intervening medium, that recalls and fixes it more ftrongly. He fends his duty to you, and mine accompanies, to fhew this *new-comer* the way.

Adieu!

FRANCES.

LETTER CCCXLI.

Dear FANNY,

Dublin.

THE weather was fo bad that I could not get farther than Kilcullen yesterday. I asked for Mrs. —'s apartment and aired her bed for her laft night: which to do more effectually, I poured a quart of hot punch into the warming-pan. I found our little Kate extremely well; fhe thrives apace, and will not be fuch a Queen M.b as you apprehended. The lightning blaft that fhe brought

into the world with her, remains in her forehead still. She ought to have been christened Semele, but in compliment to her godmother ; who is herself more worthy the address of Jupiter, than ever our poor elf will be : which to put past a doubt, I must acquaint you that she is reckoned very like me.

The day I left you, I went to — and besides the poem he has published, he shewed me a large volume in manuscript ; among which there were a great many very pretty things. I assure you that this gave me a very sincere pleasure, tho' it convinced me that I was never designed by nature for a wit, as I felt not the least symptom of envy or jealousy upon such an occasion. Is this meanness a mark of genius or no ? Addison and Dennis were both infected with it. It depends entirely, upon the moral turn of the mind.

My sincere compliments to the worthy, friendly and agreeable couple you are with ; and swear, without perjury, that I am my dearest Fanny's truly affectionate husband,

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXLII.

MRS. S — has had *an affair* lately ; she calls it a marriage, and pleads some statute, which she says, intitles a woman to the rights of widowhood after a seven years separation, without receiving the least notice from her husband, who went *beyond seas*, as she expresses it. This has been really her case, in fact ; but how it stands in law, I know not. However, I think that a seven years marriage even with cohabitation, is a *natural* divorce ; for, as philosophers affirm, that every atom of our bodies is intirely changed in that term

a man

a man and his wife must certainly become fornicators at the end of it ; therefore your right scrupulous christians should be re-married every seven years, till they dwindle into that stage of life, when, and when only, lovers become Platonics indeed.

I was yesterday at —, and was really vexed to see such poor doings. There was two hours consideration, and the whole house called into consultation, the result of which was, to give half a guinea toward a charity, where ten should have been given without hesitation. Men huxter shillings as if they were to live here for ever, not considering that if they had that prerogative, the greater dignity should be in every action of their immortality.

It has been remarked, that persons in narrow circumstances make a great display of generous sentiments, while those who are in affluence, too often betray a contracted mind : but to abate our vanity in this particular, may not the only difference lie here, that the first are liberal of what they *have not*, and the latter parsimonious of what they *have* ?

Adieu !

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXLIII.

Dear HARRY,

Mallow.

THO' real illness is the cause of my present retirement, I do not repine, as it purchases me a little leisure to converse with you and myself ; which is more than I have been blest with, since we parted. A violent pain in my side has been, with difficulty, allowed an excuse for not going to

this night's ball, which is the only one I have missed since I came hither. I have not drank the waters these three days, for I imagined they increased the disorder in my side, tho' they agreed perfectly well with me, in every other particular. Perhaps, by repairing my constitution, they might have augmented that connate complaint of mine;

" The young disease, that must subdue at length,
" Grows with our growth, and strengthens with
" our strength."

Indeed, my Harry, both my mind and body are harrassed beyond measure. What would I not give for any little habitation of my own, where I might enjoy the blessings which God has given me, a fond husband, lovely children, and a turn for reading and reflection ! But, alas ! the prospect of this charming scene, exists only in my wishes, and like a shadow vanishes before the piercing eye of reason. I do not mean to be ungrateful to Providence, for those blessings I at present enjoy : I own them far beyond my merits, and hymn the Almighty with devotion for them.

I am certain that if my situation in life was such as I have wished, I should have a much higher relish for gaiety than I now have ; for I do not pretend to despise the pleasures of the world, or think, that virtue and wisdom dwell only with contemplation ; they are to be met with every where, even *in the streets* ; but tho' my disposition and age naturally incline to cheerfulness, the constant anxiety I feel for the unsettled situation, and uncertain state of my husband and children, too often clouds my brow, and makes wan Care usurp the place of smiles.

Adieu !

FRANCES.

L E T T E R CCCXLIV.

Mallow.

I Thank you for the pleasure I received from both your letters; I have had a thousand fears for your safety; I was born a coward; I have lived one, and believe I shall die so: my mind is never easy about you one moment; I open your letters with trembling haste, yet fear to look into them; with different perturbations far, I used to read them! You do not acquaint me what has been done in your late affair: I wrote to you already, on this subject; perhaps you have not received my letter, for at present, I direct at hazard; but shall continue to write, to satisfy, at once, my duty and inclination.

This is the worst place in the world, for a person in my present temper of mind. I think we formerly agreed, that particular happiness disqualifies us for general society, more than particular uneasiness*; but I had not then felt that kind of sorrow, which absorbs the whole soul, and connects every object we see, and every sound we hear, with the idea of our own distress.

The reading a beautiful passage, towards the conclusion of Thomson's poem on the Spring, yesterday morning, threw my mind into such a state, as is not to be expressed. It was a description of happiness, such as ours might have been, had it pleased God to have blest us, even with humble competence. I fear I was to blame for murmuring, but indeed I could not help it. That charming picture of rational delight, made me repine at being debarr'd those dear, those innocent,

* Letter C.

those virtuous enjoyments ; the tender duty of a faithful wife, and the increasing joy of a delighted mother : I am, alas ! forbid the happy task,

———“ To rear the tender thought,
 “ To teach the young idea how to shoot,
 “ To pour the fresh instruction o’er the mind,
 “ To breathe th’ enlivening spirit, and to fix
 “ The generous purpose in the glowing breast.

But, I will stay my rising sighs, and stop my flowing tears ; it is not yet too late ; and if the all-wise disposer sees it good, he can and will *raise* me to that *humble state*, where all my hopes, nay all my wishes are centered : where I may share the happiness of educating our dear children, with the best of husbands ; where we may behold their spring and summer without blast or drought, and our declining autumn, nay our winter, passing without storms away. Amen, to this sweet prayer.

Adieu. My head aches much, but my heart more !

FRANCES.

LETTER CCCXLV.

Dear FRANCES,

I Received your very pretty, *unphilosophic* letter ; however, you speak very naturally, and sensibly too. I perfectly agree with you, in every thought, hope and wish ; the only difference, that I am less impatient at the delay, and more resigned under the disappointments of fortune.

The affair you inquire about, stands just as it did when we parted : I have a reason for not pressing it now ; my friends are not quite strong enough.

I do believe that the gay scene you are in at present, is not very agreeable to you ; if you had no
 other

other objection, the too great hurry of it would be one. You remember my making Miss — stare once, by an adage of mine, that *I could forgive none but a pickpocket, for loving a crowd.*

Since I came here, I have inquired into the story of Mr. —, and find it just as we had heard it. He is really a man of understanding, and yet does many silly things. I have known several persons of sense, but very few who always use it :

— “ They bear it not about,

“ As if afraid to wear it out ;

“ Except on holydays or so,

“ As men their best apparel do.”

Adieu!

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXLVI.

Dear HARRY,

IN this scene of perpetual hurry and dissipation, if my letters are frequent, they cannot be long ; you must therefore be content with a bare superscription sometimes, just to shew that I exist, when the *important nothings* I am engaged in, and which have the rank of *moral duties* here, may not allow me time for more. I own too, that I am afraid to trust myself alone, with a pen and ink ; the consequence is hurtful to me ; for, contrary to the received opinion, I find it less painful to suppress the uneasiness of my mind, than to give it vent. I wrote a long, and of course, a melancholic letter to you, last post ; I hope it did not affect you, as much as it did me ; but why need I fear ? for thou art actually a lineal descendant from old Nestor Iron Side ; and misfortunes must be *sledges*, before they can make any impression on you.

I never

I never was, am not, nor ever shall be a philosopher ; and what is more, I am far from regretting that want of sensibility they boast of : I aim at an higher character, that of a *christian*, where feeling is not incompatible with resignation ; and to lament without upbraiding, is not a breach of duty. But enough upon a subject, that you and I can never agree about. I rejoice, however, to think that it is the only one, we ever had a dispute on.

Adieu, and Amen,

So be it.

FRANCES.

LETTER CCCXLVII.

My dear FANNY,

I Acquiesce in your philosophy, it cannot arise from a nobler principle, or stronger source, than religion. Stoicism is too much bravery for a woman. I have very little support from thence myself, and leaving out the word *lament*, my philosophy agrees perfectly with your definition. Heathen philosophy was founded on pride, the christian on humility ; and therefore, more consonant to the nature of so helpless and dependant a creature as man.

There are three species of philosophy, which I have severally plied with tolerable success : one is the stoical pride of rising above all worldly concerns ; the second, an acquiescence in my lot, which naturally induces a sort of indifference about it ; and the third, a habit of turning my thoughts from present uneasiness, and gloomy prospects, upon more pleasant scenes and subjects, either in the reflections of my own mind, or in the application of proper studies.

I laid

I laid aside the first, because it favoured too much of heathen self-sufficiency; I grew ashamed of the second, for I thought it but the ordinary effect of low spirits; and have abided by the latter, because I found it free from my objections to the two former, and have experienced it to be both a more immediate and effectual remedy, than either of the others.

However, it must be an advantage to have passed through these three degrees, for I fancy that the perfection of philosophy, must be compounded out of a proper mixture of them all.

Adieu !

HENRY.

LETTER CCCXLVIII.

My dear HARRY,

I Received your charming philosophic letter, and I remember that you wrote pretty much in the same strain to your friend V—— some time ago; who, though a man of sense and religion, is, notwithstanding, as great a *lamentor* as I am. Did he ever answer that letter?

I think with you, that philosophy sits as awkwardly on a woman, as a suit of armour; but there have been amazons in morals, as well as war. For my part, I neither envy nor admire, and of course, shall not endeavour to imitate the Caracatura. Gentleness of manners, and softness of heart, are, I think, the most amiable characteristics of a woman. Let man, like the strong oak, brave the storm, and stand unmoved amidst it; while we, like the slight weeping willow, yield before every blast; or, like the sensitive plant, shrink from each pressure.

I have.

I have the pleasure to inform you, that Thursday next is fixed for our return to the fort, and I think you will receive this letter time enough, to meet us the next day, at dinner.

Adieu !

FRANCES.

F I N I S,











